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The Problem of Authority in the Theology of Alexander Campbell

Kenneth E. Hartman

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THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY IN THE THEOLOGY
OF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

by
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of the requirements for the degree of
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The Bible and the Bible alone is the creed of the Protestants" was an important statement. It startled the Protestant world, and eventually brought a reformation era into the thought and theology of the Protestants in America in the nineteenth century.

The Campbells, Thomas and Alexander, with their whole heart, believed the above statement and declared themselves more strongly when they said, "where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent." This was the Reformation or Restoration motto of the nineteenth century.

The motto is written in the form of a simple sentence. We can read the words, and we can understand their meanings. But back of these words are many, many problems which will be discussed in the course of this thesis.

The problems of the paper shall all center themselves around and about "the authority of the Bible". The problems themselves are concerned with such questions as Christian Union, revelation, inspiration, Bible interpretation, Lockian Philosophy, creeds, Reformation and Restoration, testimony, opinions and tolerance.

These specific problems have been approached, not with preconceived ideas, notions or opinions, although in many cases it was difficult for the author to overcome a
certain bias or prejudice. But the material at hand, the original writings of the Campbells, father and son, have been searched; notations have been made; and evidence has been gathered on each of the particular points in question. It is the purpose of this thesis to present those facts.

The facts gathered, concerning the problem of authority in the theology of A. Campbell, will be presented in topical form in this paper. First will note the background of Mr. A. Campbell, and observe its influence upon his life and teachings. Then we will record the position taken by the reformer himself. And finally, we will observe the influence of his principles upon other men and other groups of Christians.

Before we can understand the problems, it is necessary that we understand the early life of the Campbells. If we study them closely we will notice that there were certain definite facts that caused, at least for them, the "reformation or restoration". As many a reformer before them, Thomas and Alexander Campbell saw the many flagrant abuses of the systems or system at hand. They saw that the Protestants, who were supposed to use the Bible as the "only rule for faith and practice", had to a large degree substituted the creeds or confessions of the denominations. Instead of going to the Bible for their final authority, churchmen, both Catholic and Protestant, went to creeds and confessions, which the Campbells referred to as "human inventions". Thomas and Alexander always hated creeds. It mattered not to them whether the creeds were good or bad, they despised them with an intense and constant hatred. A creed or confession meant
to them strife, proselyting, bickerings, jealousy, sectarianism, and intolerance. These petty evils they could not sustain. So because creeds and confessions were abused in their general use, the Campbells would not accept one of them as authoritative or binding.

In addition to this first evil of abuse, they saw that creeds, and evils resulting therefrom, were not meeting the needs of Christian people. They saw, just as other reformers saw, that the Bible in the language of the people was needed. They saw the decay of creeds. There is something to be said on the side of creeds, but here, we are noting the viewpoint of Thomas and Alexander Campbell.

Another fact is evident. This fact has been explained in many ways by many interested students. This fact is, that the Campbells were excommunicated from the sect with which they did not agree. However, it may be explained, here is a reason or cause for the "reformation or restoration".

Finally, this fact becomes evident as we study the lives of Elder Thomas and Alexander Campbell. They really believed and practiced their earnest conviction of the "authority of the Bible alone". There can be little doubt of this fact for it is firmly buttressed in their speeches, writings, and active lives. And having this one great principle in mind, and, being men called to the Christian ministry of the Word, they could not do otherwise than to teach and to preach that which they believed God had revealed and made known to them.
With these observations in mind our study of the problem of "authority" in the theology of A. Campbell will begin.

Many thanks are due to the faculty of the College of Religion for their kind interest and helpful suggestions, for both this thesis and for the thirty hours of graduate work taken in addition.

Especially to Dean Fredrick Kershner are these thanks directed, in grateful acknowledgement for his cooperation and inspiration, without which this thesis would have been an impossibility.

April 30th, 1937.

Kenneth E. Hartman.
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CHAPTER I
BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The term "Campbellite" is obnoxious to that group of Christian men and women who call themselves "Disciples of Christ", or "Christians".

We know for a fact that about the year 1830 the term "Campbellite" was given in derision and to mock the belief of the Campbells and those who followed them in that peculiar belief. The term "Campbellite", although inspired of strife and jealousy, has a grain of truth in it. That truth is, that the Campbells founded, or as the followers of the Campbells would hold, rediscovered, the great working principle of their reformation.

Here is the evidence, written by Alexander Campbell in his address to the Virginia Baptists, "We both professedly believe the whole testimony of the Twelve Apostles, all the facts as they are on record, and the primary ones, as narrated in the "Apostles' Creed"; ... We, in one summary, believe that "there is one body and one spirit, as we also have been called to one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one immersion, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and with all, and in us all". We also agree that the Lord Jesus requires us not only that we call him Lord and Master; but that we do all he commands us".  

Someone of the leading thinkers among the Presbyterians in 1832, severely criticized Alexander Campbell as "one ungrateful to the Presbyterians, sinister in his designs, a false accuser, a disguised infidel, a false teacher, a mere natural man, unregenerate, unitarian and deceitful." ¹

Alexander Campbell thought this criticism to be unjust, and answered his accuser in the same article. ¹

The Missionary Herald, a Presbyterian periodical, comments about "Campbellism" thus:

This is the great curse of the West, more destructive and more injurious to the cause of religion than infidelity itself. It has no creed or confession of faith of its own. ... Its religious requirements are simply to be immersed and to give consent to historical facts of the New Testament.

The cutting criticism was answered immediately by Alexander Campbell:

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the avowed "creed and confession of faith" of the Disciples of Christ, to the exclusion of all uninspired, or human creeds or confessions of faith; for these are but the wisdom of man, and not the wisdom of God. ...

Things to be considered in baptism: 1) the action commanded to be done; 2) the subject specified; 3) the meaning or design of that action. ... Jesus commanded a certain character to be the subject of a certain action, for a certain specific purpose of design.

These are not all of the heretical charges against Alexander and his followers. Some are worse and others are in a lighter vein. But the fact still remains evident that the father and son believed and taught something that the majority of Christian leaders who were contemporary with them, did not teach.

One writer in 1830 styles "Campbellism" thus:

"This term is used to denote the doctrine of Alexander Campbell, well known in his disputes with Mr. Owen, 'On the Evidences of Christianity'..." The peculiarities of this scheme seem to be mainly comprehended in two points: First, that saving faith is only an historical belief of the facts stated in the Bible. Secondly, that baptism, which is synonymous with immersion, and for which every such believer is a proper subject, actually washes away sin, and is regeneration."¹

The truth of the testimony above, is this: that Thomas and Alexander Campbell did teach what they believed and they had followers. On the other hand, we Christians should be tolerant, one of another. If "The Disciples of Christ" do not want to be called or known by the term "Campbellite", we should respect them enough not to use a term so unpleasant to them.

Since Alexander Campbell proceeded to build upon the foundation that his father laid, let us study, in a brief survey, the life of Thomas Campbell.

Thomas Campbell was born in February 1763, the first day of the month, in County Down, Ireland, and died January 1854, the fourth day of the month in the Campbell homestead in Bethany Virginia.² He was the man who pioneered and blazed the trail for his oldest son to follow. His ancestors were Scotch.

2. William Herbert Hanna, Thomas Campbell, p. 25.
Elder Campbell had a "deeply religious nature, but he failed to find satisfaction and peace in the Church of England to which his father belonged. His brothers belonged to the Seceder Presbyterian Church. ... Thomas was thrown into association with the Seceders and very much preferred their type of religious life and order, to that of the church of England."¹ He found a greater peace and quietness by prayerful strivings as he walked through the fields.²

His education was completed in the University of Glasgow. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Ireland. In 1787 he married Jane Carnegie, by whom his popular son Alexander was born in 1788.²

While living in Rich Hill in 1798, we read they were profoundly influenced by a congregation of Independents. For, the whole Campbell family, at this time, belonged to the Anti-Burgher branch of the Seceder Church which was noted for its intolerance, its sectarianism, its narrow and selfish spirit. This spirit was repulsive and abhorrent to the mind, heart and soul of Thomas Campbell. In 1804 he led an effort to unite the Burghers and the Anti-Burghers. Shortly afterwards, because of ill health, he left for America, leaving the family in charge of his eldest son, Alexander.

1. Charles A. Young, Historical Documents, p. 27f.
3. There seems to be a question about the exact date of the birth of A. Campbell. This will be discussed in the "Life of A. C." p. 11.
In 1808 he delivered the remarkable "Declaration and Address", which was destined to become the source of a life-long inspiration for the son, and which was to become the hinge upon which the religious beliefs of thousands of Christians was to swing.

Through his influence the Christian Association of Washington was organized.

This event ended his era of work as a pioneer. Not that he was inactive, but his son took the reins of the reformation and guided it thenceforth. The elder Campbell took the role of a preacher and pastor, for he was content to leave the major portion of the task of the reformation to his able son.

On June 1, 1851, the elder Campbell, then blind, gave his farewell discourse to a large congregation in the church at Bethany. For the Scripture reading he selected Matthew 22: 37-40:

Jesus said unto them, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. ①

In the discourse which followed, he gave exhortation to the holy and righteous living. ①

He lived and died in accordance with the belief set forth in the "Declaration and Address":

Nothing is essential to the conversion of the world but the union and cooperation of Christians. Nothing is essential to the union of Christians but the Apostles' teaching or testimony. ②

2. William Joseph Moore, Thesis at Butler University, 64.
The above, is in brief, the history of the man who was the pioneer of the "reformation or restoration" movement in America in the nineteenth century.

We, who follow after him, may disagree with him in actual practice and method, but we, who believe in the "freedom of Christian men and women", must honor and respect his position and his life.

There have several references to the "Declaration and Address" previously been made. Since this is the document that the new thought was built upon, and since it was the document that is foundational for our study on the problem of authority in the theology of Alexander Campbell, it is proper that we study the essential pregnant principles contained therein.

First, we note the cause of the Restoration or Reformation Movement. As we studied the life of Thomas Campbell we noticed that he disliked strifes and divisions among Christian thinking people. And he was convinced that if the Bible were true, as he, and others with him presupposed, then it at once became necessary for all Christian people to unite under its authority alone. If Christian people did unite under this one authority, the logical result would be that there would be one united Church, Christ being its head. Then, and then only, would the great prayer of Christ for His disciples come true. Then, and then only, would the admonition of Paul find its fulfillment; for then Christians would not be followers of Paul, Apollos, or Peter, but they would indeed be followers of Jesus Christ.
In the introduction to the "Declaration and Address", we read these words, which give forcible expression for the cause of the Restoration Movement:

O! That ministers and people would but consider there are no divisions in the grave, nor in the world which lies beyond it! There our divisions must come to an end! We must all unite there! Would God we could find in our hearts to put an end to our short-lived divisions here; that we might leave a blessing behind us; even a happy united Church.

Thus the problems of strife, hatred, jealousy and bickering were to find their ultimate solution in the complete and entire unity of all Christian people.

Also, in the Introduction of the "Declaration and Address", the aim and the scope of Christian unity is not narrow or sectarian, for the authority for this unity is derived from the one authority to which all Christian adhere.

The desire and hope of the Elder Campbell was stated thus:

With you all we desire to unite in the bonds of an entire Christian unity ... Christ alone being the head, the center, his word the rule; and explicit belief of, and manifest conformity to it, in all the terms. More than this, you will not require of us; and less, we cannot require of you; nor, indeed, can we reasonably suppose any would desire it, for what good purpose would it serve?

Sincerely, from their own point of view, Thomas Campbell, and later Alexander, tried to unite all Christians. But soon it was evident they could not. Soon they had to form a church of their own, where they could promote the views that they hoped and prayed would be universal. In the "Declaration and Address" this event of separation is foreseen, as Thomas Campbell speaks and writes upon the founding of a new association which stood firmly on "the Bible authority alone".

1. Charles A. Young, Historical Documents, p. 95.
This is that part of the "Declaration and Address":

We have resolved as follows:

I. That we form ourselves into a religious association under the denomination of the Christian Association of Washington, for the sole purpose of promoting simple and evangelical Christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions.

IV. That this Society by no means considers itself as a church, nor does it at all assume to itself the powers peculiar to such a society; nor do the members, as such, consider themselves as standing connected in that relation; nor as all associated for the peculiar purposes of Church association; but merely as voluntary advocates for Church reformation.

V. That this society, formed for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity, shall to the utmost of its power, countenance and support such ministers, and such only, as exhibit a manifest conformity to the original standard in their conversation and doctrine, in zeal and diligence; only such as reduce to practice that simple original form of Christianity expressly exhibited upon the sacred page; without attempting to inculcate anything of human authority, of private opinion, or the inventions of men, as having any place in the constitution, faith, or worship of the Christian Church, or anything as a matter of Christian faith or duty, for which there cannot be expressly produced a "Thus saith the Lord", either in express terms or by approved precedent.

As far as the problem of authority is concerned, this is indeed the belief. At this time, we would note that, although the purpose of the Association, which was the direct result of the faith of the Campbells, was not to organize a peculiar church group, yet, Thomas Campbell had already laid down certain specific requirements which were binding to those who confessed and accepted them.

These are the specific requirements set forth in the "Declaration and Address" by Thomas Campbell:

1. According to Cruden's Concordance, there is no such phrase as "Thus saith the Lord" in the New Testament.
2. Charles A. Young, Historical Documents, 74-86
3. ibid., 60-66.
1. That the Scriptures of the New Testament are the supreme and ultimate source of authority for Christian life and practice.

2. That the New Testament contains a perfect and complete model of the Christian institutions, as to faith, life, worship, ordinances, and government.

3. That the Scriptures are essentially and intentionally intelligible, as far as the matters of salvation are concerned.

4. That the right of private interpretation is assumed on every page, as well as the certainty that all who read the Scriptures without preconceptions, will come to the same understanding of them.

5. That the Church needs reforming by being restored to the New Testament model, and that a complete restoration is both desirable and possible.

6. That the Church of apostolic times was essentially and intentionally one organic body.

7. That the matter of faith and opinion in Christianity are easily distinguishable, and that recognition of what is thus essential and what is non-essential will result in unity of faith and practice.

8. That the apostles stood upon the same plain of infallibility and authority in their teaching as that on which Jesus stood.

The final piece of evidence, concerning the "Declaration and Address" is the propositions in which all, who were members of the Association of Washington, were to agree. Thomas Campbell makes the plain statement that these propositions are not terms of communion, nor are they a creed.

I. The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to Scriptures, and that they manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else; as none else can truly and properly be called Christian.

1. Charles A. Young, Historical Documents, 60-66.
II. The true Church of Christ is against all schism and division, and that in order to do this, nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them by the word of God.

III. The New Testament is a perfect constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament church, and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was for the worship, discipline, and government of the Old Testament Church, and the particular duties of its members.

IV. The silence of the Bible is not to be added to by human power.

V. Inferences and deductions are not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians.

XI. That division among the Christians is a horrid sin fraught with many evils.

XIII. That if any circumstantial indispensable necessity to the observance of Divine ordinances be not found upon the page of express revelation, such, and only such as are absolutely necessary for this purpose should be adopted under the title of human expedients, without any pretense to a more divine origin.

These statements are here quoted for the purpose of stating the belief of the source of the authority in our discussion which will eventually follow when we study the problems concerning authority.

These are the foundational views upon which both father and son built, and these same historical statements are being used as the solid rock in the theology of the Disciples of Christ, today.

Let us turn at once to the interesting life of the vivacious son who carried on the work that his father started.

1. The statement "where the Bible speaks, we speak...:" does not support this assertion.
2. Charles A. Young, Historical Documents, 107-114.
CHAPTER II

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE LIFE OF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

Alexander Campbell was born in the County of Atrium, in Northern Ireland, September 12, 1788. He was brought up in the home of a Seceder minister in the Presbyterian Church. His ancestors, paternal ancestors, were Scotchmen. His paternal grandfather had been a Roman Catholic, but had turned away from it and accepted the Anglican faith. His father and two uncles could never find complete satisfaction or peace in that church, so they joined with the Seceder Presbyterian Church.

He received his preparatory education under his father, Thomas Campbell, who was educated at Glasgow University, and who was one of the most accurate English and classical scholars, and an exact and thorough disciplinarian and teacher. We read that Alexander had a normal religious development. And it is also evident that at an early period in his life, that he, along with his father, developed an antipathy to sectarianism. All about him there was a continual "party spirit, petty denominational jealousies, and hatred on every hand". Also, he felt the influence of the father who objected to the disunity and hatred, and had taken active steps to unite the people of his own Church. This project begun by Thomas Campbell bore fruit in the union of Burghers and Anti-Burghers that was realized in 1820.

2. William Joseph Moore, Thesis in Butler University, p. 47.
3. Charles A. Young, Historical Documents, p. 50.
The father left for America putting young Alexander in complete charge of the family. Then in 1808, Alexander, with the Campbell family, emigrated to America, but they were shipwrecked on the coast of Scotland. While in the wreck he firmly resolved to give his life to the call of the Christian ministry. As the family wintered in Scotland, he spent his time in Glasgow University. There he met James Alexander and Robert Haldane. The outcome of his contacts with them was to break with the Seceder Church. It is surprising to know that his father broke with the Presbyterian Church in America, at almost this identical time.

In 1809 he left the University to start for the second time for America. On arriving in America he was just in time to read the proof sheets of the "Declaration and Address" which were at that very time, coming off the press. Immediately, it seems, he became the bold advocate and disciple of his father's position, which briefly, was as follows:

Before his arrival his father had already withdrawn from the "Presbytery of Chartiers" then attached to the "Associate Synod of North America". And discarding all creeds and confession of faith, had gathered about him a few friends, who agreed with him in the purpose of "absolute and entire rejection of human authority in the matters of religion", and the resolution to stand together upon the proposition, the Holy Scriptures are all sufficient, and alone sufficient, as the subject matter of faith and rule of conduct, and that therefore they would require nothing, as a matter of faith or rule of conduct, for which they could not give a "Thus saith the Lord" either in express terms or by approved precedent.

On September 7, 1809, Thomas Campbell and his friends formed the Association of Washington where the "Declaration and Address" was delivered. The first church of this Association was organized in May 1811.¹

The progress of Alexander Campbell in the new faith is rapid in its movement. In May 1810 he preached his first sermon, on the text, Matthew 7: 24-27.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

The sermon founded upon this text charted the course that he was to follow all his life. The course was to follow the way the compass of the Bible set for him.

In 1811 he married Margaret Brown. On June 2, 1812, he, with his family and his father, was immersed into the Christian faith, for they found no Bible proof for the practice of infant baptism or sprinkling.

In 1816 he and his father, having already separated from the Presbyterian Church, with their friends, entered into a fellowship covenant with the Redstone Baptist Association. Here it was that he delivered his famous sermon on "The Law and Gospel", Roman 8:3, was the text:

For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

In 1823, Alexander established Buffalo Academy.

In the same year he started to publish a monthly, periodical, the Christian Baptist.

In 1829 he met in debate with Robert Owen. Later in the same year he was sent as delegate to the Virginia Convention of his State Congress.

The year before he met in this well-known debate, he was married, his second marriage, to Miss S. H. Bakewell.

In 1830 he ceased to publish the Christian Baptist and became the editor-in-chief of another publication, The Millennial Harbinger.

In 1836 he debated with Archbishop Purcell, Archbishop of Cincinnati, in Cincinnati, on the merits of Catholicism and Protestantism.

In 1841 he organized Bethany College, which stands today as an immoveable monument to his untiring activity.

For forty-one years he was the editor-in-chief and publisher of a monthly periodical. This did not hinder him from other literary endeavors. Some of his other publications were the Christian Hymn book; a translation of the New Testament; a revision of the New Testament, with his own critical notes; a translation of the Acts of the Apostles for the Bible Union; Infidelity Confuted by Infidels; and, the Christian System. 1

In 1847 he began a series of travels to the old country and throughout the United States. Monthly he would write about his experiences. On these travels he was always making public appearances. In 1847 he preached in Great Britain. In 1850 he spoke before both houses of the United States Congress.

He participated in five important debates. In 1820 with the Reverend John Walker, Presbyterian, in Mount Pleasant, Ohio, he debated on infant baptism. Shortly after, he met in debate with the Reverend William McCalla, Presbyterian, in Washington, Kentucky, on Christian baptism. In 1829 he met with Robert Owen, atheist, to reason out the problem of evidences of Christianity. In 1836 he opposed Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati, on the merits of Protestantism. In 1843 disputed with D. N. L. Rice, Presbyterian, on Christian baptism.

Mr. Campbell was an earnest and sincere seeker after truth. This is shown by his intense study and keenness of mind while debating. This was an estimate given of him and his powers, during the Owen-Campbell debate:

He (A. Campbell) is undoubtedly a man of fine talents, and equally fine attainments. With an acute, vigorous mind, quick perceptions, and rapid powers of combination, he has sorely puzzled his antagonist, and at the same time both delighted and instructed his audience by his masterly defence of the truth, divine origin, and inestimable importance of Christianity. That Mr. Campbell would bring forward any new facts upon this subject was not to be expected; but he has arranged, combined, and enforced those already existing, in a manner well calculated to carry, as we are informed it has in several instances, conviction to the doubting sceptical mind.

Alexander Campbell lived a full and active life. He was always writing, teaching, and preaching the principle in which he firmly believed. This principle was light and life to him;

Mr. Campbell, therefore, accepted the Bible as the only revelation of God, upon which rested the truth in regard to the existence of God as the first great cause of all and containing all the knowledge we have about the creator and lawgiver. .... Mr. Campbell accepted the Bible as inspired word of God and it was the major premise upon which rested the whole truth in regard to the existence of God. .... Mr. Campbell taught that nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the Church, or be made a term of communion amongst Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament. 1

The great scholar and prophet was somewhat egotistic, for he says of himself in 1850:

I have laboured more abundantly than they all (his father and his ancestors), and therefore, I have no expectation of counting the years with them. ... I have, in my years already equaled Luther, outlived Calvin, and want but three or four of equaling John Knox. 2

And he had some reason to be so. Those, who really knew him, lauded him for his fine talents, and equally fine attainments. They knew the paralyzing power of his acute vigorous mind. They also knew that he was one man who was not alone 'the defender of the faith', but was at the same time, an energetic 'opponent for the faith'.

In the year of 1864 he bade farewell to his active ministry. He was a tired old man; tired of fighting; tired of controversy; tired of strife. In spite of his tiredness of age and of its accompanying feebleness, he never gave one inch of the ground he had gained. His last article in the Harbinger

was on the "Power of the Scriptures", II Timothy 3:16,17:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproff, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

After his ready pen discontinued to write the many inspiring and thought-provoking articles for the Harbinger, it lost life, and died. Soon after his death the publishing of the Harbinger was stopped, for the hand that wrote it, the brain that guided it, had gone.

It is with a certain sadness, and yet with joy, that we read his last article in the Millenial Harbinger. This article bears out the truth that he had, and always would remain firm to his high regard for the supreme, the final, and the 'alone' authority of the Scriptures.

This is the opening paragraph from his farewell message:

I wish to be free from all worldly cares, to cut myself loose from relations for which I feel a growing distaste, and, indeed a gradually increasing repugnance, and to give myself, head and heart, only to such exercises as benefit my years and declining powers. I thought, at the close of last year, that I would hold out for one more volume, and so announced my purpose in the last December number. But after the beginning of this current January number for 1864, I find myself, from any considerations, which it is not necessary to detail, constrained to abandon the purpose, and to discontinue my responsible relations as publisher. The care and labor and anxiety are too much for my years, and it is best that I should transfer them to other hands. This I have done. 2

He concludes the message thus:

Let me exhort you, brethren, not to release your efforts in any good word or work. The times are such that those who love the Lord should talk often together, and be watchful lest they neglect or forget the things which they have learned concerning the primitive apostolic gospel. Let us hold fast to our begun confidence firm until the end. It would disturb the tranquility of my declining years and fill me with sorrow inexpressible to see that the Harbinger, the child of my better years, was abandoned; or that the college, my cherished hope for permanent power and influence in maintaining the cause for which we and so many other noble and brave hearts have suffered, had passed from the affection and support of those whose support, for more than twenty years, has made it an ornament and blessing in the land. ....

On March 4, 1866, he died in the midst of friends and true to the faith which he had held nearly all of his long life.

We have read the principle promulgated by Thomas Campbell in his great memorial, "The Declaration and Address". In the same manner let us note the position taken by the son who wrote, among other numerous publications, the Christian Baptist and the Millennial Harbinger.

Although it is true that the basis for the work of the son was the address of the father, let us read, in his own words, the original dedications of both of these periodicals of which he was editor-in-chief, and by which he broadcast his thought over the nation and over the world.

This is the original dedication of the Christian Baptist:

To all those, without distinction, who acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be a revelation from God; and the New Testament as containing the religion of Jesus Christ; --Who willing to have all religious tenets and practices tried by the Divine Word; and who feeling themselves in duty bound to search the Scriptures for themselves, in matters of religion, are disposed to reject all doctrines and commandments of men, and to obey the truth, holding fast to the faith once delivered to the Saints, ----this work is affectionately dedicated by

The Editor (A. Campbell)¹

When it became evident to the editor that there were other problems than those concerning Christian baptism and its related problems, for which the Christian Baptist was published, Alexander Campbell stopped this publication, and began to publish the Millenial Harbinger. The new publication was not limited to the one specific problem, but enlarged the scope of the editor to deal with any problem concerning Christianity.

The dedication of the monthly periodical, The Millenial Harbinger, was Revelation 14: 6, 7:

And I saw another messenger flying through the midst of heaven, having everlasting good news, to proclaim to the inhabitants of the earth, even to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people, ----saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgments is come; and worship him who made heaven, and earth, and sea, and the fountains of Water. ²

Indeed this periodical was the Harbinger of truth to Christian people who followed Alexander Campbell and his teachings. And because Alexander Campbell was an earnest seeker after the truth, may it be said in fairness and as a compliment to his memory, that he permitted both sides of any question to be published in his periodical.

Of course he refuted all arguments and propositions that conflicted with his own, or were not in harmony with them. But he did give all opponents the right and privilege to write their own views and present them to him. In many cases the opposing view was printed verbatim.

Whether or not we agree with him is another question, but we must honour him for permitting his antagonists to present their side of the case or cause. This practice, or courtesy, was not generally practiced by many prominent churchmen contemporary with him.

By the time of the publishing and printing of these two monthly periodicals, A. Campbell was the established and recognized leader of the Reformation, or Restoration Movement, in the body of Christian, the Disciples of Christ in America. And because he was the leader, he answered most of the questions which concerned themselves with problems of "authority".

It is chiefly from the Millenial Harbinger that we shall draw the greater portion of A. Campbell's views on the problems which follow.
CHAPTER III

AUTHORITY AND THE BIBLE

Alexander Campbell did not arrange his topics into a systematic study. This is not to say that he did not handle specific problems systematically, for he did. For instance, he did not work out a full and complete system on the question of "authority and the Bible", but he did write numerous general articles in which he dealt with the specific problem. If we wish to catalogue his complete viewpoint upon this problem, or any other problem, we must follow him through the years in his writings. This we shall do.

At the beginning of this section, we say again that Alexander Campbell believed "that where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent". In this section of the thesis, we are attempting to delve under this statement to find just what made father and son hold to it throughout their whole life, and be guided by it.

We know, generally, from their writings that they held the supreme authority of their life to be God; God as revealed to men in the person of Christ; Christ as promised to them by the Old Testament; Christ as fulfilling the Old Testament promise by the New Testament historical fact of His life with men on earth. It is in the New Testament that all men are able to read about Him, His life and His commands for them. For this reason the authority of the New Testament is rated above the authority of the Old Testament for Christian faith and practice.
Now we shall follow Alexander Campbell’s writings from the days of the Christian Baptist, 1823, through the writings in the Millenial Harbinger, 1859. There we shall view and think, with him, "the problem of authority and the Bible."

First, from the Christian Baptist comes this paragraph written from an address given by Alexander Campbell to you preachers.

Recollect that everything depends upon your accurate knowledge of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and upon your forming just conceptions of the human mind, and the prejudices and pre-possessions of your contemporaries. You must know yourselves, your Bibles, and the prejudices of your auditors, if you would be a successful champion in the ranks of the faithful, in the armies of the living.¹

This position is definite. It holds firmly to the authority of Scriptures. It studies theology as history only. First in importance is the Bible, and the accurate knowledge of it.

To bear out the same position farther there is in the Christian Baptist this statement, "...nevertheless the Holy Scriptures do, in and of themselves, independent of all external helps, possess a real sufficiency to make the diligent student of them "wise unto salvation", thoroughly furnished unto all good works".² Then, in almost the same breath, he adds this assertion, "we do not mean the sufficiency, as would, in the first instance, obviate the necessity of proper teaching".² So we observe; from the preceding

2. Ibid., 119.
3. The question of "proper teaching" is a source of contention, even among those in the same Christian group.
sentences, that there is a necessity of something in addition to the authority of the Holy Scriptures. This point is discussed fully by Mr. Campbell in many articles under the headings of creeds, confessions, or human inventions. There is a faint suggestion here that the authority of the Bible is not "all sufficient", as has been presupposed by the ardent reformer. And we mention the fact, that what might be "proper teaching" to another pedagogue, might be, and was "improper teaching" to Alexander Campbell.

Under the title of 'On the Gospel, now the word of God', Mr. Campbell states the assertion that the Bible is the infallible arbiter in all questions touching the problems in Christianity.

It is the word of faith, the subject matter of the Christian's belief, and the means by which we have confidence in God. It is the word of truth emphatically, which delivers us from error and darkness, and imparts to the mind certainty in the things unseen and the future relation to the divine purposes. ... The book commonly called the New Testament, rather the sacred writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ, is that from which I have derived my views of Christianity, and to which I alone subscribe as the infallible arbiter of all questions touching the word of God, and the salvation of Jesus Christ."

After this article, another was discovered in which Mr. Campbell forcibly describes just what the Bible means to him with vivid words and forceful imagery.

The Bible is the perfect rule of faith and practice, a way-bill to heaven, a lamp to the path of the just, the luminary of the moral world, the voice of Heaven to bewildered man, saying, "This is the way, walk you in it", it is the good man's treasure, the Christian's strength, faith's refuge, virtue's consolation, hope's anchor, and Heaven's pledge of immortality to man. 1

In correspondence with Mr. William Jones of London, the editor of the Millenial Harbinger responds thus in answer to the query, just why those known as Disciples of Christ use the Bible and Bible terms:

We choose to speak of Bible things in Bible words, because we are always suspicious that if the word is not in the Bible, the idea which it represents is not there, and always confident that the things taught by God are better taught in the words, and under the names which the Holy Spirit has chosen and appropriated, than in the words which man's wisdom teaches.

I need not say much upon the chapter of human traditions. They are easily distinguished from the Apostle's traditions. Those of the Apostles are found in their writings, as those of men are found in their own books. Some human traditions may have a show of wisdom, but it is only in appearance. ....

... We do no doubt necessarily differ in the extent of our knowledge of the whole revelation of God; but should you be more intelligent 2 in the sacred Scriptures than we, we will thank you to teach us the way of the Lord more perfectly, and we will thank God for your assistance. We trust that we have been taught that if our brethren are more gifted than we, or have improved their opportunities better than we, they are not on that account heretics, and to be treated as heathens and publicans. 3

Here we notice the attempt of the apologetic for "the Bible alone". If it were simply a matter of man's intelligence then all would be easy. But it is not true, for if the Bible is true and authoritative, it is true and authoritative before man's intelligence has had a chance to study it.

2. Intelligent is defined as "one endowed with intellect or reasoning".
It is also true that God is trying, through communication of the Bible, to contact man by intelligible means. Almost at once another question arises, which leads to many others; does the man who is most intelligent and who understands the Bible the best, make the ideal Christian? And does that man know God better and follow after him with a greater persistence than his less intelligent brother? From the Bible examples of the Rich Young Ruler and even of Saul of Tarsus, we discover this to be untrue. It is not until something beyond the human reason touches Saul that he receives Christ and his revelation as final authority. It must be true that that external something called faith, proceeds with reason and intelligence, faith leading the way.

Idle speculations and abstractions irked the reformation leader. Naturally they would, when he held so closely to common sense and reason. From his belief, this conviction follows:

Now the Bible has in it no abstract notions whatever, not even the word eternity, immensity, etc. ... I think it behooves us to be suspicious of all abstract notions in religion, as we find none of them in the nature of the Bible. ¹

Need we mention many terms that are abstract? And if anyone can mention one abstract term or idea, the above statement is disproved. Are not some words in the Old Testament and New Testament general and indefinite, and even abstract in their meaning?

That he believed in common sense is not to be doubted in the least. Therefore he held that the Bible was to man through the medium of sensible objects.

It is therefore in accordance with the necessities of language, and the constitution of our nature, that the Bible communicates to us information concerning unseen things, through the medium of sensible objects. ... Now as we are wholly dependent upon the Bible for our information respecting the matter of which it treats, it is obvious that however our information may be increased in proportion as we become acquainted with the Bible, it can never extend beyond it ... 1

In another place among his writings Alexander gives more evidence concerning this debatable view:

It is evident that the gospel must be of necessity something very simple, when it is recollected that it is to be preached to every creature. The great majority of the human race are ignorant and debased, slow of apprehension, and feeble in their capacity .... 2

Whose intelligence, then, guides these people? Whose understanding makes the Bible clear to them? Can we trust the various translations which have already been interpreted? Shall we follow Erasmus, Luther, Wycliff, or Alexander Campbell?

Several years later he answers the above questions to his own satisfaction. But Alexander Campbell does not say whose interpretation of the Bible, which is absolutely authoritative, man is to follow, when he writes this statement:

The Bible alone must always decide every question involving the nature, the character, or the designs of the Christian Institution. Outside of the apostolic cannon there is not, as it appears to me, one solid foot of terra firma on which to raise the superstructure ecclesiastic ...

Nothing less authoritative and divine can fully satisfy the consciences of all parties. 1

Again this record of his immutable faith in the Bible is inscribed on the pages of the Millenial Harbinger.

We believe the Bible to be God's own book, and well adapted to the ends of its existence. It is a lamp, and gives light. It makes the simple right. 'The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible' is the standard of faith and practice. The faith is common. Our inferences and opinions are our own. ... It has appeared to me that the very dictation of a creed is offering a substitute for the employment of our minds upon the oracles of God is challenging us to decide without reflection on the greatest question of the universe. ... We therefore renounce every teacher but Jesus, and all ambassadors from Christ except the Holy Twelve, 2 Moses and the Prophets have led us to Jesus the Lamb of God, the sin-atoning Lamb, and as the great interpreter of God to man; and we solemnly vow this day, before heaven and earth, that we do and will acknowledge no leader but Jesus, and no teacher but the Messiah.

We have no better creed than the Bible. The sects pretend to be founded upon it; therefore the whole sectarian world acknowledge its excellency. We will not make it void by affixing to it the appendix of a human creed.3

The above insinuation that the sects of Christendom are not founded on the "Bible alone" is explained thus:

While it (Protestantism) acknowledged the ALL and ALONE sufficiency of the Bible for faith, piety, and morality, neither carried out in practice to its legitimate and proper extent its hatred for the former, (creed) nor its admiration of the latter; (Bible); insomuch that the spirit of the Roman despotism still exerts an undue influence over the lives and actions of many who boast loudly and long of their deliverance from its coercions and enchantments. The creed making and creed-dictation passion is now as strong and vigorous amongst the Protestant tribes as it was in the most popular cannons of the Roman hierarchy. 4

2. Luke 10:1 tells of 70 disciples who were sent out two by two.
4. ibid, p. 9.
Furthermore, the Bible is not to be doubted at all for it contains no physical errors.

An astonishing feature of the word of God is that notwithstanding the time at which its compositions were written and the multitude of topics to which it alludes, there is not one physical error, --not one assertion or allusion disproved by the progress of modern science ••••. Well search among its fifty authors, search among its sixty-six books, its one thousand one hundred and eighty-three verses, search for only one of those thousand errors which the ancients and moderns committed when they speak of the heavens or of the earth, -- of their revolutions, of the elements; search but you will find none. 2

Mr. Campbell approved as "excellent sentiments" the "Declaration of Rights" of the congregation in Jeffersonville, Iowa.

Be it resolved, that it is right for every member of this church, to read the Scriptures, and decide what they mean for himself. •••

... That this church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets; and not upon the authority, views, or interpretations of any man, living or dead; that we utterly deny the doctrine of human infallibility; and regard the writings of men, however learned, as unworthy of being made the bone of contention. We consider every congregation of Christians as responsible alone, for its doctrine and practice; and therefore, we will not allow other congregations to interfere with our rights.

That we consider everything mentioned in the Bible as a proper topic of investigation. •••

That the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible is our creed, confession of faith, and law-book.

... That to impose upon this church the views, inferences or interpretations of any man, council, or congregation, as the standard of faith, is the same thing as to make a human creed and to substitute it for the Bible. Such conduct is highly sectarian and schismatical. •••

3. What use was made of A. Campbell's interpretation of the New Testament?
The next two excerpts from the Harbinger are to show that the Bible, the divine revelation, by divine authority was intended to be widely circulated and followed.

... I especially entreat you to be always prepared to lift up your voices for the free circulation of the Bible, without note or comment, both at home and abroad.

The old constitution and the new are the central ideas of Judaism and Christianity, and are therefore, to be found in the two volumes on which a hoary antiquity has imprinted the names of the "Old and New Testaments" or two collections of Jewish and Christian Scriptures, by divine authority; but human expediency.

The Bible is authoritative for Mr. Campbell, but the naming of its parts is done by human minds and human hands, for human purposes.

Mr. Campbell writes in many places that the Bible is easily understood, for it could not have much authority for him unless he could understand that authority. In order to understand the Bible properly he states that:

The book of God must be studied, as God in his providence and grace has presented it. It must be all studied, under competent instructors, its history, biography, and prophecy. It is all to be studied and taught historically.

If the Bible is so simple that enough can be understood for man's salvation, what is the need of competent instructors? What need has God for ministers and preachers? What does the word competent signify? Does it mean those called of God by the authority of God, or competent according to the views of Biblical and historical interpretation by A. Campbell?

1. Why was A. Campbell's Bible with critical notes used so freely?
3. ibid., Series III, Vol. VI.
References are made often in the reformer's speeches that "...the gospel is a system perfect, complete, and consistent within itself". We can understand how he then held to the "whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible", and, "where the Bible speaks, we speak; and where the Bible is silent, we are silent". But we are wholly unprepared for an assertion of this kind:

But they (the Scriptures) were committed to the people in their own native language, directly from those persons to whom God had given them in charge. Were they, then, to translate them into their languages? This question, though not propounded in the very words of the book, and consequently, not formally answered, is nevertheless, clearly intimated, and most satisfactorily disposed of in the Christian Scriptures.

The latter quotation is from one of Alexander Campbell's addresses in which he is talking about translating the Scriptures from the originals into English. The point the author wishes to show here is that Alexander Campbell is not consistent with his principle with which he began. That principle is also stated in the paragraph above. In his own words he says "clearly intimated". This is just the principle of certain denominations that he had been fighting and disproving for years and years.

In fairness to Mr. Campbell, it must be stated that this is the only example in all his writings in the Millenial Harbinger where the author found that he abandoned his first important principle. There is a possibility that he was less consistent, but the author cannot produce one other original statement as evidence.

The doubt arises again in the mind of the author regarding "inspired translation". As we peruse the pages in the Millenial Harbinger, we learn that A. Campbell approved of new, and of course better translations of the Bible. But the doubt clings concerning the fitness of an uninspired translator to translate the Bible for all the people, the mass of people, who cannot read the Bible in the original languages, and who read and base, because of their reading, their hope of eternal salvation on that translation.

Suppose that all translations are inspired translations. Which of the many English translations is without error, as A. Campbell has stated? This doubt arose because of the views of both Campbells which were "the Bible without note or comment", "the Bible alone without any human addition", and "that the Bible contains no physical error, no not one".

Mr. Campbell was so sure of his position that he staked his faith, indeed, he staked his life on it. He said:

We have earnestly contended for the faith originally delivered to the sanctified and divinely commissioned Apostles and Evangelists of the Lord Jesus Christ. On this platform we stand or fall forever.

When we read his views we are deeply impressed with the persistency with which he clings to the authority of the "Bible alone". And as we read and review his position a host of specific problems are present. We shall study several of them as we record his views on Bible authority,

Divine revelation and inspiration of the Bible, and Bible interpretation.

In reference to the specific problem of Bible authority, we present this quotation: "a correct and perspicuous translation of the Holy Scriptures is all that this age, or any age, requires, so far as Christian knowledge or faith is concerned".¹

Z. T. Sweeney, in his writings, has noted, in an essay on "The Source of Authority in Christianity", a correct summary of A. Campbell's thought. Mr. Sweeney writes that God was the primary authority. Then this authority is delegated to Christ the Son, by God the Father. In his turn the Son delegated this authority to the twelve apostles who never delegated it to others.² It is impossible that one without God's authority can translate the Bible correctly or perspicuously.

Nevertheless, Mr. Campbell based authority on a correct and clear translation of the Bible.

This brings us to the second specific problem, that of divine revelation and inspiration. The Bible can only be authoritative because it is divinely revealed to man by God. How and when it was revealed is a very delicate point to prove or ascertain. As usual, Mr. Campbell answers queries concerning it. And believing that revelation ceased with the completion of the Bible ³ he wrote as follows:

Revelation, though originally in the form of oral testimony, is now altogether in the form of a written record. It is this form, indeed, still more circumstantially addressed to our reason and our faith------

³ William Joseph Moore, Thesis at Butler University, 73.
The meaning of its language and the truth of its developments are alike to be ascertained by the faculties to which they are conjointly addressed. It always proceeds upon the assumption that unless it is understood it cannot be believed, and that unless it is believed it can exert no salutary influence upon our hearts and lives. 1

We believed that the Bible is divinely revealed because of its own internal evidence. It is the same with inspiration. Alexander Campbell explains inspiration this way:

The proofs for the divine origin of our sacred writings, or more correctly the inspiration of the Scriptures, have usually been drawn from two sources, --the Bible itself, and those displays of supernatural power by which revelation has been accompanied or confirmed. 2

This is a somewhat clouded way to explain inspiration, but the only means we have is by our reason and senses. We cannot peer into God's mind, on his level and prove it. We must take his own word and his own book. II Timothy 3:16 is finally quoted by Mr. Campbell as embracing his view on inspiration.

I believe that all Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for teaching, for conviction, for instruction in righteousness.

After we have the divinely inspired Bible, we must interpret it correctly. We have read, according to the above quotation, that the inspiration and revelation of the Bible was divine. And if we remember, we know that it was also presupposed by Thomas Campbell, in his "Declaration and Address". But the problem of interpretation is more difficult to solve.

However, Alexander Campbell approaches this much debated problem with a humanistic and rationalistic attitude of mind: "sense is man's guide in nature, faith, in religion, and reason". 1

But even before it is possible to interpret the Bible, men must learn to realize just what the Bible is, and what human opinions are. He says:

...matters of faith are facts testified in the Scriptures. God's promises, as well as his threatenings, are all facts. ... Opinions are strictly, in my use of the word, and in that of Walker and other lexicographers, "persuasions of the mind, without proof". Opinion differs from both faith and knowledge ... 2

In the preceding sentence we read the phrase "facts testified in the Scriptures", which is explained in the following manner:

No testimony, no faith; for faith is only the belief of testimony, or the confidence in the testimony being true. To believe without testimony, is just as impossible as to see without light. 3

Paralleling this attitude is another with the same thought:

...to follow common sense 4 and read it (Scriptures) subject to the ordinary rules of interpretation. 5

Mr. Campbell's opinions of interpretation cannot be summarized in a sentence, but they can be understood if we read through selections from various of his articles.

The first selection comments upon the basic principles of his attitude on interpretation of Holy Scriptures.

The Bible is to be interpreted in the same manner, i. e., by the same principle as all other books. 6

4. E.B. Brightman, An Introduction to Philosophy, 31-66, list these tests: instinct, custom, tradition, consensus gentium, feeling, sense, experience, intuition, correspondence, pragmatism, coherence.
The second selection states clearly his "Rules of Interpretation". They will be given exactly as he has written them.

1. What? -- They (rules of interpretation) are directions of formulas, which explain and define the mode of right investigation and perspicuously representing the sense of the words, in any particular author.

2. Origin? -- These rules serve not only to assist in finding the sense of words, but also in judging whether any particular sense put on the words be true or false. They are deduced from the nature of language, as above explained; and deduced, not by logical subtleties, but by observation and experience. ....

Usus loquendi is known by testimony. If the usus loquendi is a mere matter of fact, it may be known, in the dead languages were flourishing and in common use, and who well understood them. This testimony direct or indirect.

Direct testimony may be obtained, first, from the writers to whom the language investigated was vernacular; either from the same authors whom we interpret, or from their contemporaries. Next, from those who, through foreigners, had learned the language in question. Thirdly, from scholastics, glossographies, and versions made while the language was spoken, and by those who were acquainted with it. ....1

A third selection on "Bible interpretation" reads thus:

It being admitted, that, in the Scriptures, God has addressed himself to men in the human language, to ascertain what he has said, becomes at once the great object of biblical study. Words are, therefore, of the utmost consequences, not intrinsically, but as the only means through which we can attain a knowledge of the divine will. They are important as the dispositions of the things of life and salvation which are treasured in them. And as, in former days, an angel directed the first Gentile convert to stand for Peter, "who" said he "shall tell thee words whereby thou shalt be saved": so even yet, it is from words we must obtain the knowledge of truth, and the hope of heaven. 2

In a fourth selection Mr. Campbell lists his most definite views concerning the point in question.

At present .... we would only impress upon the mind of the reader, that the very fact that we have a written revelation, that this revelation was first spoken, then written, supposes that there is somewhere a native or an acquired art of interpretation; that the persons addressed were already in possession of that art; for without such an understanding, there would have been neither wisdom nor benevolence in giving to mankind any verbal communication of God.

Revelation and inspiration, properly so called, have to do only with subjects as are supernatural, or beyond the reach of human intellect, in its most cultivated state. But while this inspiration precluded the selection of incorrect or suitable words and sentences, the inspired men delivered supernatural communications in their own peculiar modes of expressing themselves. ... They used terms of the new dialect as they used the terms of their native tongue; chose such as, in their judgment, would most clearly and forcibly reveal the mind of the Spirit to their hearers.

The Apostles acting under the high authority and commission of Jesus Christ, and inspired with all divine and supernatural knowledge, exhibited in doctrine, in precepts, ordinances, promises, threatenings, and developments, in things spiritual, celestial, eternal, are in consequence of these endowments and authority, worthy of all respect and regard, even when writing upon the most common matters .......

If we have a revelation from God in the human language; they must be precise and determinate in signification, and that signification must be philosophically ascertained, that is as the words and sentences of other books are ascertained, by the use of a dictionary and grammar.

Every word, indeed, had but one meaning at first; but to prevent the multiplication of words to an indefinite extent, and to obviate the difficulties that would thence arise in the use of the knowledge of a language, words, in the process of time, were used to represent different meanings ... (one meaning, the dictionary will decide; more, the use in the sentence or context). 1

These are his common rules given for the interpretation of the Scriptures:

1. Historical: title, date, author, place, occasion.
2. Dispensation.
3. Philological principles.
4. Common usage at the time words were used, and the meaning in the context.
5. Resemblance.
6. Ascertain point to be illustrated by works in comparison.
7. Come to understand the words and phrases. 1

These are the rules of interpretation. And it would seem to the author that an intelligent man schooled in languages would be needed to interpret the Scriptures. In some places A. Campbell held to the fact that men must accept the interpretation of the majority of the wisest interpreters. In other places he held to the "right of private judgment".

Concerning "private judgment" we read as follows:

Every man's judgment is private; and if a man has not the right of private judgment, he has no right to any judgment at all. If a man judge at all, he must judge as an individual ... An intelligent disciple of Christ prefers that which is original to that which is ancient; and to one of the few within Noah's ark, rather than to one of a million without it.

We shall bring to a close this chapter with a concluding paragraph on the right of private judgment.

There is no more delightful religious privilege than to the one to which we have just adverted, that of judging for ourselves of the true sense of Scripture. It gives assurance of freedom from priestcraft and clerical denomination, and not only enlarges our horizon of religious knowledge, but brings the soul into closer contact with the divine mind. ... How preposterous it is to place the Bible in the hands of men, and at the same time gravely inform them that they cannot understand it. 

CHAPTER IV

AUTHORITY AND CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

It has been mentioned before that A. Campbell disliked creeds and confessions. His dislike arose from the abusive use of them. For he saw in them symbols of party concord and party unity. He also saw in them disunity and strife in the whole Christian Church on earth.

Since he accepted the authority of Holy Scriptures, he could in no way reconcile creeds and the Bible as he found not a single fact in all Biblical testimony which condoned creeds as they are written. He did find suggestions which lead toward the principles contained in creeds but he always stood by the principle that "human creeds are composed of the inferences of the human understanding, speculating on the revelation of God". 1 "To one whom the Bible was absolute, perfect, and complete, he considered such inferences to be "drawn by human understanding", 1 and to have "all the defects of the understanding". 1

His reasons of opposition to creeds were numerous and emphatic. But all of his opposition contained the basic fact that human creeds contained in them speculations which could in no wise be substantiated in fact by references to the Bible, and especially to the New Testament. Specific arguments against human symbols are advanced by him: 2

1) This instrument of instruction, like its author (man) is all imperfect. 2) It is unsafe. It is a human instrument of falsehood and truth. 3) It is unnecessary. If Scriptures tell us all they tell us, why abandon Scriptures? 4) It is inefficient. All the component parts of this human device being uninspired and destitute of divine authority, ...... 5) It is unauthorized. 6) It not only produces disunion, strife, contention, and every unchristian feeling and practice; but it renders them perpetual. 7) It occasions enormous expense. 8) It murders time. How absurd it is for a moment to lay aside the Bible.

Opposition to creed were fostered because of the fear that they would supplant, oppose, or be substituted for the Bible. 1

...... This enterprise (the reformation), so far as it was hostile to those creeds, warred against them, not because of their hostility to any private or favorite opinions which were desired to be substituted for them, but because those human institutions supplanted the Bible, made the word of God of non-effect, were fatal to the intelligence, union, purity, holiness and happiness of the disciples of Christ, and hostile to the salvation of the world.

...... Our opposition from creeds arose from a conviction that, whether the opinions in them were true or false, they were hostile to the union, peace, harmony, purity and joy of Christians, and to the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ.

Not all of his antagonism to creeds is stated in the negative way. Some are stated in a positive and affirmative manner. 2

Whatever is real good is now done in the world is done by the simple narration of God's love of men, and all the mischief is done by the dogmas of human speculation or the regulation of schismatical establishments. If the former is universally attended to and the latter abandoned, all Christians would be one in name, in affection, in faith and hope.

In the same serious vein Mr. Campbell re-
iterates, time after time, that creeds and opinions are
"persuasions of the mind, without proof", and that matters
of faith are "facts testified in the Scriptures". He
then comments upon creeds and Scriptures after this manner:

Before a creed was adopted, while the Scriptures
were acknowledged as the only creed, that congregation was
one and undivided ... And that is just the difference
says nothing against these things, it is true; but it says
nothing for them.

Following his line of reasoning, then, creeds have
caused all sectarian evils including modern proselytism.

All true religion is founded on the true knowledge
of the only true God and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
Christ.

And we still more deeply deplore the false and
deceitful bonds of union and new centres of attrac-
tion around which the affections and fraternal sympathies of
their respective proselytes are made to revolve. Christ
crucified is not the bond of union. Their own little
digests of opinions, their own ingenious devices, ab-
stractions, and forms of worship and governments, are
substituted for—or, what is practically the same thing,
—appended to, the Book of the New Covenant on which
Christ's Kingdom is founded.

In another article we read this indictment
against creeds as regards their superfluity and uselessness.

The Bible is the Christian's Creed. All Christians
agree to this; but they do not agree that any human creed
is inspired. ... If the creeds agree with the Bible, then
they are as useless as a fifth wheel to a wagon; if they
disagree with the Bible, then they are pernicious and
impious, and should be burnt, as the Ephesians did their
magical books (Acts xix). This one argument set them
aside forever.

This one argument did not set the creeds of the various denominations aside forever. Time after time, in article after article, the reformer and his companions were forced to oppose and reject creeds, symbols, and confessions, in and out of their own group. It mattered not to him or to them whether or not the creed was good or bad; whether or not the creeds contained truth or falsehood; together they rejected them, entirely and completely. 1

We .... have opposed creeds because they were creeds, irrespective of the doctrines contained in them; not, indeed, because they exhibited a system of faith or of sound doctrine, but because they were made indispensable and authoritative terms of communion, or justifiable and valid grounds of exclusion; because the terms and phrases or the mental abstractions and opinions in them, propounded as the essential doctrines of Christ, expressed in human terms, were placed upon the same footing with the Oracles of God, and sometimes above them, insomuch that it became a greater sin to oppose or controvert the words of the creed than the words of the Bible.

And again we must notice a positive statement, a positive statement for the rejection of all creeds everywhere. 2

The rejection of human creeds by the originators and promoters of the present reformation, was mainly due to a deep reverence for the Divine Scriptures, and a just regard for the supremacy of the Lord Messiah. It was esteemed a desecration of the Sacred Oracles to bring them down to the level of human opinions, or to make them the vehicle through which the dogmas and speculations of men were to be imposed upon the conscience; and it was regarded a presumptuous usurpation that uninspired and fallible teachers should in solemn conclave, venture to change the laws of Christ’s kingdom, and to establish new regulations for the government of his people. Hence originated the strong opposition that has been made to clerical assumption, and the urgent appeal to the word of God itself as the only tribunal to be admitted or acknowledged in the decision of religious questions.

2. ibid., Series III, Vol. IV.
As we conclude the references of A. Campbell pertaining to his rejection of all creeds, we record an apology of his which catalogues six reasons for the refusal to adopt any human creed. 1

The following reasons contain my apology, to all whom it may concern, for refusing to adopt a human creed:

1st. I am not expert in detecting errors of doctrine, especially when made by good and great men, who often, without intending it, give error the semblance of truth.

2nd. By taking the Scriptures alone for my creed, I have no errors to look of except in myself.

3rd. I feel that it is safe for me to spend the time which others spend in examining church creeds, in examining my heart and conduct, in the light of which the Scriptures plainly teach.

4th. As the Scriptures teach me my frailties and failings, I feel that I have in them a sovereign remedy for all my spiritual diseases.

5th. As I am frail and weak, I feel daily need of strength; and as the Lord has promised to be the strength of my life, I know that he can only do so, by my taking good heed to my ways, according to his word.

6th. These being my reasons, and feelings, as I do, the sufficiency of the Scriptures for all necessary correction and instruction, I could not betray my confidence in the word of my Lord, and thus sin against God, in doing that which is to exalt the authority and wisdom of man, above the authority of God.

In addition to these various shades of reasoning for the rejection of creeds, A. Campbell made many statements in regard to them and their use in general Christian practice.

First, he writes, in criticism of traditions and dogmas, a picture of vivid and colorful oppression of both the Bible and ethics, by traditions and dogmas. 2

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The volumes of traditions, the cabalistic dogmas, the eastern philosophy, the pagan speculations, combined and magnified, intercepted entirely or totally eclipsed the light of the Moral Sun (sic).

... Though the total eclipse was total in Rome, it was not so everywhere... the Bible was brought out of prison, and Luther bid it march. He made it speak in German, and thus obtained for it a respectable hearing. It was soon loaded with immense burdens of traditions, drawn from the cloisters and the cells where it had so long been incarcerated. It soon became unable to travel with its unusual speed, and then stopped the Reformation. (sic)

About the commencement of the present century, finding the notes and comments, that glosses and traditions were making the word of God of little or no effect—I say, the pious of several of the great phalanxes of the rival Christian interests did agree to unmanacle and unfetter the testimony of God, and send it forth without the bolsters and crutches furnished by the schools; and this, with the spirit of inquiry which it created and fostered, has contributed much to break the yoke of clerical oppression, which so long oppressed the people—I say clerical oppression; for this has been, and yet is, though much circumscribed, the worst of all oppressions ... If the clergy never could reform the system, the system always could reform him... A new order of things... has begun. Many of the priests have become obedient to the faith, and the natural, political, and religious rights of men have begun to be much better understood. All these auguries are favorable to the hopes of the expectants of the restoration of the ancient order of things....

We expect no new Sun, no new revelation... the same Gospel, but only it shall be disinterred from the rubbish of the dark ages.

Next he suggests that all human documents be cast in to the fire and burned, that is, if we wished to be freed from them and their destructive influence. 1

"The Bible and the Bible only, is the religion of the Protestants", will never be appropriate until all our human Bibles shall be thrown into the fire, or at least dialoged from that place in our churches and schools, which can only be safely occupied by the simple unadulterated oracles of God.

The most logical reason that Mr. Campbell advances against the use of creeds, inferences, dogmas, etc., etc., is that all men err.¹

That all men err, and consequently, you and I, is as you say, a self-evident position, and it is one reason why I never dare impose my inferences or reasonings and conclusions upon others as terms of Christian communion. Whatever is a matter of fact, plain and incontrovertible, is that, and that alone, in which we cannot err—and that only should be made a term of communion ....

Because the “Bible is matter of fact, plain and incontrovertible” is the chief reason why it should be used, and used alone without other human addition. Human traditions were made because of “a cringing carnal disposition” and because those framing them had “interested motives”.² Such is the view of the nineteenth century reformer. But, he never makes such statements unless he also gives something about the Bible, for that is his interest in his life.

The Bible alone reveals but one system of truth. We do not say to embody this in the form referred to is impossible... With this truth all those who compile systems of faith profess to be deeply penetrated; and, accordingly we are informed of each of these “Creeds and Confessions”, that “it embodies the word of God.

... What do you conceive to be the faith referred to in the text? We reply, the Bible contains it—the Bible “without note or comment.”³

In an article published in 1853 by A. Campbell, written as follows: ³

The very climax of the Christian religion amounts to this, ... “I was hungry, and ye gave me food, ... etc.” Nine-tenths of the Christendom instead of being a house of prayer is little than a den of thieves.

2. loc. cit., 207-8.
3. ibid., Series I, Vol. IV, 495-6
But if the Bible law was generally adopted, Christians, perchance, might come to see eye to eye; perchance might unite, might become one; various identification might thus be lost. It would be a death-blow to human legislation and clerical usurpation.

And if the Bible cannot govern the church, it must be deficient. If it can govern, it must be the best. If it can govern, what an indignity is cast upon the Lawgiver to substitute human law in its stead.

Not only does the creed take the place of the Bible, but councils are condemned along with them, for, as Mr. Campbell would hold, council were not popular with primitive Christians.

As long as they (the Sacred Oracles) were the only rule of faith, religion preserved it native purity; and in proportion as their decisions were either neglected or postponed to the inventions, it degenerated from its primitive and divine simplicity. ....

The historian has nothing to report of the ecclesiastic creeds of the early ages. He affirms that the apostles did not make a creed; .... that there was no necessity for any such things; that as long as the Bible was the only rule of faith, religion flourished in its native purity; ....

Councils did not arise in the Church for some time after the apostles had gone to rest. ... In short, every bishop instructed his own people in the true faith of the church, and confuted all sorts of errors by the authority of Scripture and tradition.

This above explanation does not at all explain the fact of the councils of the Church at Jerusalem which Paul has recorded in various epistles, one, in the first chapter of Galatians. Just what these meetings were to which Paul had to report is uncertain in the scope of their power, but certain in the scope of their influence. However, this does not explain the fitness and correctness of creeds. Mr. Campbell had an exact notion of what was

correct and what was incorrect. So, he therefore asks a question about "the correctness of creeds" and answers it himself. 1

But how is the correctness of the creed itself to be decided? It will be answered by an appeal to the Bible. But why appeal to the Bible if it does not teach the truth in so distinct and definite as not to be misconstrued.

The sects pretend to be governed by the Bible, but they make the Bible serve them. They profess to take the Scriptures for their guide, but they make their own system and opinions lead the way for the Scriptures.

The group of Christians known as the Disciples of Christ had to be very careful, for they themselves were constantly being touched by the disease of opinionism, which they condemned. 2

There is a growing taste for opinionism in the ranks of the reformation. This must be quashed, or there will be an end to all moral and religious improvement. It has ever been the harbinger of schism, the forrunner of all discord, vian jangling, and bad feeling amongst all classes of religionists. ... what is opinion? Persuasion without proof. ... An opinionist is one who is fond of opinions, especially his own. ... I hereby define opinionism to be, the liberty of propagation of one's opinion.

Opinions in religion can have no authority.

But with the watchful reformer on guard, opinions, creeds, symbols and confessions had very little chance to make an impression on their institution. That is the church as a whole did not formally accept such and such a statement as a church confession or church dogma. This is the reason he wanted no formal creed. 3

Every church which makes use of a human confession of faith should reflect, that in such a use this confession becomes an needful to her as the Bible itself. ... On the principles I am combating, the confession of faith is as necessary to be circulated as the Bible. God has made the Bible necessary. 

... Christian brethren of this church, by your constitution you would be compelled to reject the person whom Peter admitted, and indeed, the members of the church at Antioch received by Paul; in fine, you must reject all members of all the apostolic churches, till they would study your creed and assent to them. What further proof need I bring that you have departed from the original constitution of the Christian Churches and cannot be an apostolic church.

Of course we must remember that these remarks, all of them, are the remarks, opinions and beliefs of just one man. And that he preached and taught and wrote them in all earnestness and sincerity.

To hold his view as the result of a few years of study, to prove them to be true and valid was his lifelong job. And his views are still being fought for and defended to this very day.

In the year 1833, there appeared in the Harbinger, under the signature of "A Christian" and "A Believer in all Unbelief", two articles called creeds, one "The Believer's Creed"; the other, "The Infidel's Creed".

Evidently, from the favorable comment by the editor, he welcomed them. They are as follows:

**The Infidel's Creed.**

You have had a hard scuffle with the various sects, for nearly ten years past, about their different creeds, opinions, and traditions. As the war of creeds has ceased, and peace has been proclaimed in favor of the Bible, I shall send you a short creed, which for the

sake of distinction, I shall call the Infidel's creed.
For you must know that we have a short of what we believe
and teach.

1. I believe that there is no God, but that
matter is God, and God is matter; and that it is no matter
whether there is any God or not.

2. I believe also, that the world was not made;
that the world made itself; that it had no beginning;
that it will last forever, world without end.

3. I believe that man is a beast; that the soul
is the body and the body is the soul; and that after death
there is neither soul nor body.

4. I believe that all sectarianism is religion,
and all religion is sectarianism; and that there is no
religion except sectarianism. Amen.

5. I believe not in Moses; I believe in the
Egyptian Chaldean philosophy.

6. I believe not in the New Testament; I believe
in all creeds, systems, and heresies.

7. I believe not in the Bible; I believe in
traditions, oral and written. I believe not in revelation;
I believe the Talmud; I believe in the Koran.

8. I believe not in Christ; I believe in
Socrates, Confucius, in Sanchoniathan, and in Mahomet--
in Thomas Paine and Lord Bolingbroke.

9. I believe in all unreasonableness—in all
unrighteousness and wickedness—in all religions and in
no religion. In short, I believe in all unbelief. Amen.

A Believer in All Unbelief.

THE BELIEVER'S CREED

1. I believe all that is written in the five
books of Moses, all that is written in the Prophets and
Psalms.

2. I believe in, and obey the New Testament of
our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Christian.
Anyone who reads these two creeds can readily observe the slur and the condemnation offered to those who differed with the reformation principles and theology. Anyone who can read these two creeds can discover the intolerance of those who despised creeds.

But there is ample proof, in the writings of Mr. Campbell, himself, that he did not utterly reject the teaching principle of creeds, not the popular use of creeds, for he himself indulged in them. And even as he denies his use of them and bitter feeling toward them, he writes them to be dispersed throughout Christendom. Under the title of "Questions and Answers" he broadcasts the beliefs and principles of the reformation. These, presumably are to be believed and taught, else why write them? Why teach them? Why advocate them?

As a final observation on the problems of authority and creeds, let us observe the principles written and taught in Mr. Campbell's creed of "Questions and Answers". These were never formally accepted, as far as historical evidence is concerned, by a convention or council of the Christian group to which he was attached. But it is also evident that the following principles were accepted and used widely by the influence of his Christian personality.

The following questions and answers are tendered to our readers in a variety of subjects which have been discussed in our periodicals. The answers here given are the only answers which, in accordance with reason, common sense, and the Holy Scriptures, can be given. The proof is not however adduced, nor even are the answers fully illustrated because we presume this has already been done in extension, in our previous pages. But as at present advised, we rather think it to be out of the pale of any communion with experience, observation, and the inspired writings, to furnish answers than those given.

Q. 2 But are there any common or natural desires in the human constitution? A. The animal appetites and propensities are all natural and universal; so is the desire of happiness, or the full gratification of all our capacities.

Q. 3. Is the knowledge of our origin and destiny necessary to our happiness? A. Yes: and, therefore, it is the most common and natural of all rational desires.

Q. 5. Is man the author of his desire? A. No more than he is author of himself.

Q. 8. How could God communicate to man his knowledge? A. By revelation in words.

Q. 9. Why not by his works? A. Whatever may be said about the works of creation attesting the existence of God, nothing plausible can be said in behalf of a discovery of man's origin and destiny from the works of creation; for by works alone can the knowledge of the past and the future be communicated to man.

Q. 10. But can God speak? A. Most certainly, if any of his creatures can speak. To say that God could not speak to man, or that he never did speak to him, is, of propositions, the most irreconcilable to all the principles from which we reason in reference to our rank and standing in the universe, and the character of the moral government, and the character of the Governor of the world.

Q. 11. Has God spoken to man? A. That he has, not only do our reasonings from his perfections, from man's rank from all analogies, from traditions, from miracles, abundantly assert; but the book, the record itself, the thing communicated, the revelation, irrefragably asserts and vindicates its authorship.

Q. 17. But is it not impossible for a natural man to understand spiritual things, in whatever style they may be expressed? A. Yes: if the word communicated to him, the child of pure nature, the savage, or the barbarian, without a verbal revelation, cannot understand the
things supernatural, any more than a man, having eyes, can see natural objects without natural light.

Q. 20. Can you instance any addresses in the Old Testament or the New Testament to such characters—to natural man, to unbelievers, which intimate that they can understand them? A. Very many—Old Testament, "Look to me all you ends of the earth, and be saved, for I am God, and there is none else .... I will make my words known to you"—New Testament, —John says the "testimonies" were written.

Q. 23. Who of the New Testament authors writes most upon the mysteries, or secrets of religion? A. Paul.

Q. 26. How comes it to pass that a book from such an author, on such a subject, and addressed to all mankind, should be so difficult to understand? A. There are in religion, as in nature, deep and unfathomable things which overwhelm, in religious awe, all the powers of the human mind. There are "things too hard to be understood" while the language which suggests them is as plain and intelligible as any other language in the book.

Q. 27. But is not the gospel one of the plainest things in all the divine communications, and are not all the Christian institutions as plain as language can make them? A. Most unhesitatingly we must answer yes. To the poor and the ignorant, the gospel is announced, as it is designed for their salvation, it must be plain.

Q. 29. To what, then, are we to attribute the numerous and discordant theories of faith and salvation which have fractured Christendom into many sects? A. These are not to be charged to the obscurities of revelation, but to the pride of the human mind. Men will not submit to the righteousness of God. Mysticism, and philosophy falsely so called, have created an aristocracy in the commonwealth of religion, and from the times of Platonic conversions till now, men have prided themselves in belonging to this aristocracy, in taking rank according to the precedence of mysticism and speculative science, and have thus become the prey of an empty and deceitful philosophy. Not one in ten thousand of the men of renown in the kingdom of the clergy, have ever stooped to the simplicity that there is in Christ. They have been scaring to the skies in their speculations, and by their own actions regard not humility as the high road to honor. They have been interred in the piles of rubbish which they have reared. To them one might apply the lines of the poet—
"O sons of earth! attempt you still to rise,  
By mountains piled on mountains, to the skies!  
Heaven still with laughter the vain toil surveys,  
And buries madmen in the heaps they raise."

But while God resists the proud, he gives grace to the humble. Every one who will sit at the feet of Jesus, will know that the knowledge of salvation is easily acquired; and that the simpleton, or he that becomes a fool, that he may be wise, will attain to the full assurance of understanding in the mystery of Christ.

Q. 31. Are there not many honest men on the opposite sides of all theological questions? A. Honest to a theory and to the prejudices of education, they are; honest also, to what they conscientiously apprehend to be the will of heaven; honest, as was Saul of Tarsus while he anathematized the Messiah—but honest to the Bible they cannot be, who mistakes the way of salvation.

Q. 33. How can a man be honest to the Bible? A. by coming to it without a single inclination to any opinion, theory or system, whatever; submitting his mind to it, as the sealing wax is submitted to the signet, prepared to receive from it, its own impression. The mind of such a person, like a mirror, reflects the image of a book.

Q. 35. Are there not many who approach the Bible without any bias, who, nevertheless, arrive at very different conclusions, or receive very different impressions? A. Not on the matters which are connected with salvation. But it is to be suspected that the number who approach the Bible are fewer than any sectary can think. The minds of almost the whole community are polluted with human inventions, from the first dawns of reason, even before reflection has dared to compare, or decide.

From the constitution of the human family, the mind, as well as the body, of one generation is dependent on that which preceded it; and this greatly contributes to the difficulty of reading the book without prejudice.
Q. 37. How many creeds are there in Christendom?  
A. One for every day in the year.

Q. 38. How many sects are there?  
A. As many sects as there are authoritative creeds.

Q. 40. Who has made these creeds?  
A. Philosophers, Conferences, Synods, or some individual leader.

Q. 48. Have these creeds preserved unity and purity in those societies?  
A. No. They have produced divisions and every evil work.

Q. 53. What evidences are there that they have produced corruptions?  
A. They are known to have produced hypocrisy, false swearing and prevarication, for the sake of livings—strife, envy, hatred and indeed every evil work. Witness the anathemas, excommunications, and slanders hurled from all ecclesiastical bodies meeting under their sanction, against all who oppose their pretensions. The old side Methodists, for example, will now permit even the preachers of reform to enter into a pulpit or meeting house belonging to them in the capacity of preachers; while, before the formation of a new creed, they used to kneel at the same altar. This is also true of Baptists, and even Quakers, boasting of their love of peace and brotherly kindness.

Q. 54. But will not a creed keep the Lord's table pure?  
A. No; not once.

Q. 56. But can we call any table "the Lord's" which excludes from it the Lord's people?  
A. No; unless the Lord's people put on the livery of the man of sin.

Q. 57. Did not the Apostles receive the Lord's table all who believed and acknowledged Jesus by an immersion into his death, provided they kept his moral precepts, irrespective of their opinions?  
A. Paul commanded the Roman Christians to receive one another without regard to differences of opinion. No man was excluded by Paul for difference of opinion.
Q. 58. Ought any man to read any human creed for the sake of assenting to it? A. No; unless he read them all; for how can he decide without a comparison?

Q. 59. But ought he not to compare every one he reads with the Bible? A. Yes; but this supposes him to understand the Bible as well as the creed: surely, if he can decide what is truth from the Bible, he need not trouble himself with a creed. Why impose upon himself the task of reading the creed, since he cannot receive it unless he understands the Bible before he reads it?

Q. 60. Of what use, then, is a creed? A. Of much use to build and keep up a party; to cause professors to revile, slander, and hate one another; to hold formalists, hypocrites, and pravariators together; and to exclude weak Christians and honest disciples from popular establishments. They, like strainers, retain all the coelest matter, and suffer the pure liquor to escape.

Q. 61. Do not all human platforms of church establishment reproach the Bible? A. Yes; they all say that the New Testament is incomplete, and that men are either wiser or more benevolent than God.

Q. 64. Can the Christian world ever be united or reformed on the principles of any creed? A. It is impossible, both from experience and Scripture testimony. Other foundations of hope and union no man can lay, which will stand the test of time, but the one laid by Jesus and his Apostles.

Q. 65. Ought not a Christian then to oppose, in all meekness and in all firmness, (what kind of opposition would that be?), every authoritative creed, as opposed to the wisdom and benevolence of Jesus Christ? A. Most assuredly he ought, if he have vowed allegiance to Jesus as the only Prophet, Lawgiver, Priest and King, in his Kingdom.

CONVERSION

Q. 66. What is conversion? A. Conversion is simply turning from one person or thing to another.

Q. 68. How is it accomplished? A. By conviction and persuasion. The Holy Spirit is the advocate or pleader for Jesus ever since Jesus was crowned Lord of all in heaven. He speaks in the Apostles as he once spoke in the Prophets. The words of the Apostles are his arguments, and the signs of his presence with them constitute the seal of their testimony. Their own sincerity was also confirmed by their sufferings and death.
The words of the Apostles are the pleadings of the Holy Spirit, and he that resists them resists the Holy Spirit. He that is convinced and persuaded by them is convinced by the Spirit of God, the advocate for Christ.

Q. 69. Is any theory upon this subject necessary to effect conversion? A. No more than the theory of digestion is necessary to animal health. The theory of conversion, and conversion, are two distinct subjects. Conversion is on all hands, admitted to be an actual turning to the Lord. No man is converted to the Lord who is only thinking about it, or convinced of the necessity of it, or theorizing about the modus operandi. An actual turning to the Lord, however caused or effected, is the thing in question. The cause, the means, the instrument, the theory, is not conversion; but the turning to the Lord is that which the Scriptures of truth is regarded and designated by this word.

Q. 70. But may not a good theory contribute to the conversion of an individual? A. No. A good theory may be of use to a physician, but it is of no use to the patient. Medicine for the patient, and not a theory! A theory of the mode of conversion may be of use to the converter, to direct his energies and to guide his operation; but the theory is not to be preached, as all the Apostles by their example show us. In this remote sense a correct view of the means of conversion may be of use to the converted, inasmuch as the preacher or parent, who is the converter or instrument of conversion, is lead to a rational and consistent course.

Q. 71. Is it not too presumptuous for anyone to say he has controverted another? A. It is too presumptuous for orthodoxy which ridicules the idea of any other agent of conversion than the Spirit of God; but it is not too presumptuous for the style of the New testament.

James 5:19, "Brethren if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him,"

1 Timothy 4:16, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee".

Matthew 28:18, "Go and convert the nations". 1

1. King James version of the Bible has a different translation, "Go and teach all nations". Matthew 28:18.
Q. 73. But may not conversion be gradual?  
A. A person may be some time in turning; argument after argument may induce him. This may be the work of an hour, a day, or a year, more or less: but when the last argument decides his conduct, he is still not converted until he has actually turned to the Lord. So that not almost, but altogether the change must be affected. Yet still be it remembered that conversion is conversion, and neither more or less.

Q. 74. Is there not some act called turning to the Lord?  
A. Yes; when Jesus said, "Go, convert the nations" he meant not only that they should preach and teach, but that in converting they should immerse the believers into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A CHRISTIAN

Q. 75. What constitutes a Christian?  
A. Faith in Jesus as the Messiah the Son of God, and obedience to him.

Q. 76. What is faith in Jesus?  
A. An assurance, founded on the testimony of Apostles and Prophets, that the Messiah is the Son of God.

Q. 78. What are the privileges of Christians as respects this life?  
A. They are all reconciled to God, justified, sanctified, adopted in the family of God, saved, and constituted heirs of God through Christ.

Q. 79. Are all these blessings, honors and hopes, secured to all in Christ?  
A. Yes, by the promise and oath of God. God swears unto Abraham that he would bless all the families of the earth in his Son.

Q. 85. What is meant by being justified?  
A. It is to have the remission of all our sins, and to stand as righteous persons in the sight of God.

Q. 86. What do the scriptures mean by the word sanctified?  
A. To be sanctified is to be separated to God as respects our relation with him, and to have purification of the heart conformed to that state. Thus Christians are said to be holy as respects both their state, dispositions, and behaviour.
Q. 87. In what sense are Christians saved in this life? A. From sin. "He shall save his people from their sins"; from the guilt, pollution and dominion of sin in this life, and from its punishment in the next.

THE CHURCH

Q. 93. What is the church of Christ? A. Congregation of saints on earth and in heaven.

Q. 94. What is meant by a church of Christ? A. An assembly of persons meeting statedly in one place; built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone.

Q. 95. Who are the members of the Church of Christ? A. Those only who voluntarily and joyfully submit to him as lawgiver, prophet, priest, and king; who assume him as their Saviour, die to sin, are buried with him, and rise to walk a new life.


Q. 97. Are no other articles of confederation necessary? A. None for Christians. Jesus is king and lawgiver.

Q. 101. Can any Christian congregation, by any order from the King, refuse to receive any citizen of his Kingdom? A. No; unless he act in a manner unworthy of a citizen.

Q. 104. What constitutes the regeneration or naturalization of a citizen? A. His being born of the water and of the Spirit.

Q. 106. How may he lose his citizenship in this Kingdom? A. By committing treason against the King.

Q. 107. What constitutes treason against the King? A. The placing, or an attempt to place upon the throne of legislation and government any rival of the King; or what is in effect the same, a renunciation of Jesus as Prophet, Priest and King.
Q. 115. What is meant by the discipline of a congregation? A. The application of the laws of the Christian King to the behaviour of the citizens.

Q. 123. What are to be the objects of discipline, of reproof, admonition and correction, in a Christian community? A. Unchristian words and deeds: not man's private opinions, but their individual practices.

OPINIONS

Q. 124. Are men never to be called to an account for their opinions? A. No. There is no instance of this kind in the Jewish or Christian Scriptures--God alone is judge of thoughts and private opinions.

Q. 125. But if private opinions are expressed, are they not to become matters of discipline? A. By no means, unless a person express them for the sake of compelling others to receive them, or to exclude them from their fellowship if they do not accept them. In that case he is answerable, not for his opinions, but for his practices. He is a factionist, is seeking his own honor, making a party, and on these accounts sins against the Christian constitution; and such a person, after a second admonition is rejected.

Q. 127. How do you distinguish between faith, opinion, and knowledge? A. Faith is the belief of facts testified, of testimony; knowledge is the assurance derived from actual sensible perception, by the exercises of our own senses; and opinion is the view which the mind takes of all matters not certified by testimony, or our own experience.

INFANT SPRINKLING

Q. 131. Do you call infant sprinkling a human institution, founded upon a human creed? A. What else can it be called? Inasmuch as there is no testimony that any prophet, priest, king, apostle or lawgiver, in the 39 canonical books of the Old Testament, in the 27 books of the New Testament ...either sprinkling, or causing to be sprinkled, an infant..... It is certainly a human institution, and founded upon human opinion.
Q. 132. How many reasons can you give why infants should not be sprinkled into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? A. ...Because the Lord never commanded it to be done.

Q. 137. But is it not a good and comely thing to dedicate infants to the Lord? A. Yes, indeed; but has the Lord commanded us to sprinkle them in his name, to circumcise them, or bore their ears, in order to dedicate them? No: never did he enjoin either circumcision, sprinkling, or branding ....

Q. 144. And does it not appear somewhat absurd and irreligious to hear the administrator say his good will and pleasure is to please the candidates, but that their good and pleasure ought to please God? A. Yes; but it requires a good many such incongruities to make a sectarian, and to build up a party under a human leader.

Q. 147. By whose authority was it done then? A. By that of Pope Clement the 5th, A. D. 1311.

Q. 149. Are all merely sprinkled persons, then unbaptized? A. Yes; they are unimmersed.

Q. 150. Is there any benefit resulting to the infant from sprinkling, pouring, or dipping? A. No: no more than from the sign of the cross, the holy oil, and the consecrated spittle of the "Holy Catholic, and Apostolic Church of Rome".

THE A.D.DRESS OR THE .POSS.LES

Q. 155. But were not all unbelievers in the same state? A. Yes; but not of the same views, education, character and circumstances.

Q. 159. And would you not preach reformation to Christians if they had fallen away in the least from their first works? A. Most certainly; for thus did Jesus in the letters address the Asiatic congregations.
PRESENT DIVISIONS OF CHRISTENDOM

Q. 160. How many great departments are there in the Christian nation, as they are called? A. Three—like the three quarters of the globe on one continent.

Q. 161. How do you distinguish these three prominent departments? A. There are those who take the Scriptures alone for their faith and practice, believe the original gospel, and keep the original constitutions. These are called disciples of Christ, or Christians. There are those who stand off from the foundation, and who build upon traditions and on the Scripture: these are the different sects which are called the Apostacy. And there are those who belong to neither, are mere spectators, and may be called the world.

Q. 168. And what of the apostacy—do you place all the sects in the apostacy? A. Yes, all religious sects who have any human bond of union; all who rally under any articles of confederation other than the Apostles' doctrine, and who refuse to yield all homage to the ancient order of things. (This of course does not include the sect known as the Disciples of Christ.)

Q. 170. Why call them the kingdom of the clergy? A. Because they acknowledge their government, and will that they should rule over them.

Q. 171. Wherein are they vassals to the clergy? A. In giving them the keys of the kingdom of heaven, allowing them only to administer ordinances, and in regarding them as a distinct order of men, with some sort of divine right to rule and govern the people as their lot and inheritance.

Q. 174. Are there then, no disciples of Christ in these communities? A. There are, no doubt, many.

Q. 180. How do the disciples in these sects partake of the sins of the sects? A. There are sins of sects as well as of individuals, as there are national sins as well as individual sins.
Q. 191. Ought not such, then, to come out, and not partake of their sins, that they may not receive of the plagues? A. Reason and Religion both answer, Yes. There is the same reason for coming out from the large church of the Anti-Christ.

Q. 194. But cannot a person be a Christian, and live out of all Christian fellowship? A. Yes, if banished to a Patmos, or bound in prison.

Let no person say this is a Catechism, to be committed as are those issued from authority, and patronized by sectarian shibboleths. We have no authority to make such, nor do we know who has. We have simply chosen the catechetical mode of communication; and as we get many questions touching some, or all of these matters, it appeared economical and prudent for us to answer some 200 questions at a time. As soon as we get 200 more we shall allot two days to answer them. If anyone can show that an improper answer has been given to any question, we shall take pleasure in correcting it.

Editor.

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Editor.
On preceding pages that we have read, we have noticed such phrases as "reason", "reasonable", "common sense", and "sensible objects". Particularly do we read these phrases as Mr. Campbell refers to the interpretation of the Bible, which is his sole and only authority for Christian faith and practice. All Christians can agree that the Bible is the authoritative rule and guide, but all Christians do not agree in its interpretation. Some of this difference of interpretation is due in a large degree to the philosophical attitude with which they approach the Book.

Mr. Campbell was very much influenced by the Christian humanistic philosopher John Locke. And he therefore, appropriated John Locke's ideas and used them in defence of his own position as a student of the Bible, as a student of religion, and as a student of theology. It has been a common report among those who have made an intensive study of the life of the nineteenth century reformer, that he discovered nothing new, but his active virile mind arranged and used the material at hand in very effective ways. It was by such thinking and such use, that he left his remarkable impression upon the religious history of the nineteenth century.
Let us therefore study such views, of the eminent philosopher, John Locke; such views as Mr. Campbell used to lay the foundation for his peculiar position of the authority of the Bible.

First in order, we shall read what John Locke had to say concerning revelation, or rather the testimony of revelation. 1

Testimony based on Revelation challenges the highest degree of one's assent ... whether the thing proposed agree or disagree with common experience, and the ordinary course of things or no.

We observe here that John Locke did not believe in another making an accepted religious system for any man. But each man should assent to the testimony given by revelation. Each man should study, and experience for himself the truths the testimony of revelation imparts. But, each man must assent to that testimony himself, without the deep seated prejudices of another. Mr. Locke's favorite theme, in regard to the testimony of revelation, was liberty. 2 Mr. Campbell, was influenced by this view. The result of his belief is shown by his antipathy to creeds, his respect for the Bible, and his defense of private judgment.

John Locke recorded his opinion on the Bible alone as the source of all authority in religion, in faith and practice. 3 As we read his assertions, let us compare them with those stated by A. Campbell in a previous chapter on AUTHORITY AND THE BIBLE.

2. Ibid., p. 29.
But since men are solicitus about the true church, I would only ask them, here, by the way, if it be not here more agreeable to the Church of Christ to make conditions of her communion to consist on such things, and such things only as the Holy Spirit has in the Holy Scripture declared, in express words, to be necessary for salvation: I ask, I say, whether this be not more agreeable to the Church of Christ, than for men to impose their own inventions and interpretations on others, as if they were of divine authority; and to establish by ecclesiastical laws, as absolutely necessary to the profession of Christianity, such things as the Holy Scriptures do not either mention, or at least do not expressly command.

And having such an authority, it must be interpreted rightly. A right interpretation results from "sensation and reflection" of the spoken Word. 1

So sure it is, that all our ideas of the sensible universe are the result of sensation and reflection. All the knowledge we have of the material nature, has been acquired by the exercise of our senses and of our reason upon those discoveries. With regard to supernatural knowledge, or knowledge of God, that comes wholly "by faith" and "faith" it's self comes by hearing". ...hearing comes by the Word of God spoken as much as faith itself comes by hearing... Christian faith is belief in testimony .... No testimony, no faith. The spirit of God gave the testimony first .......

Again we see in the above paragraph a definite philosophical assertion on which A. Campbell rested his case of the worth and value of the Bible, and the means by which men are able to make the proper use of it.

Lockian philosophy defines and describes sense experience still further than in the above assertion. It asserts that the mind of a child is a "tabula-rasa"; that "children are not born with innate ideas of God, hence ideas cannot be innate". 1 Hence children come to know God through the Bible only by the evidences

1. W. S. Humphries, Thesis in Butler University, 15.
contained therein. If this be true, then its terms are of vast importance; and must be clear. Belief is defined as the testimony of others. Knowledge is defined as the experience of our senses. And opinion is defined as the degree of possibility of reason. 1

Locke gave A. Campbell the view that man was a being who could be moved through his senses. This is the reason why Locke opposed traditions and opinions as futile and unnecessary. This is the reason why Locke held to empiricism and to the value of the senses. 2

In his writings Locke attempts to show the futility of empty verbiage and spineless acquiescence in traditional opinions and assumptions. .......... Freedom and reason should take the place of mere tradition, irrationality, and restrictive forces in the political, the religious, and the philosophical realm.

We understand then how traditions, opinions and assumptions could be so inadequate to men of this type of cold scientific reasoning minds. To both men, adequate ideas were those which perfectly represented those archetypes which the mind supposes them taken from; which it intends them to stand for; and to which it refers. 3 Also in opposition to the speculative language and the imaginative flights of reasoning of traditions of the church. Locke holds fast to the theme of the reasonableness of Christianity. 4

2. ibid., p. 15.
3. ibid., p. 25.
4. ibid., p. 27f.
Locke offered a common sense defence of the "Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures". Casting aside the traditions and the dogmas of the ecclesiastical schools, which bred disunity and hatred, he presented the case for the simplicity and the beauty of the New Testament unity as a basis for unity and agreement. ... Christianity is a reasonable system. Its essential features may be comprehended by the laboring class and illiterate.

Locke left his imprint on the mind, reasoning, thought and writings of Alexander Campbell. Following are two quotations taken from the editor's writings in the Millennial Harbinger. These quotations show the definite impression by Locke.

The first of these quotations concern philosophy in general. 1

Philosophy, or human reason, as may appear in the sequel, is very inadequate to the discovery of ideas on any of the great points involved in origin, obligations, and destiny of men.

The era of philosophy, mental and moral was an age of skepticism. Why should a man institute a demonstration a priori or a posteriori to ascertain a fact which he had direct, positive and equivocal evidence.

The universe must be known before it can be enjoyed.

The second of these quotations refer to the proper method of interpreting the Bible. This method is asserted to be inductive. 2

In order to render the search for truth successful, it is required that we not only be guided by just principles, as we have briefly attempted to show, but that we observe the proper method.

At one time the synthetic method was in vogue... prepounding of a theory or hypothesis ....

It was a glorious era when the genius of the illustrious Bacon ascertained the proper method of scientific investigation, and presented it to mankind, the INDUCTIVE METHOD. The method is, first to ascertain particular facts by observation and experience, and then to infer from these certain general truths.

This chapter is not lengthy for the only fact here attempted to be presented is that John Locke's philosophy became a part of the philosophy of Alexander Campbell.

As far as concerns the problem of authority, interesting statements are those which assert the "alone authority of the Bible"; and the "use of the senses and sensible objects", and finally, that one which comments upon the "indictive method" as the only proper method of Biblical investigation.
CHAPTER VI

AUTHORITY AND THE REFORMATION AND RESTORATION

The Campbells were not interested in making and forming a new creed, according to their own statements; but they were interested in the fact that Christianity, its faith and practices, should be restored to its original primitive "simplicity and intelligibility". 1

The restoration of the gospel institution has been our theme for many years. Some contend that it was restored to its original simplicity and intelligibility when the New Testament, fairly translated and disencumbered from the traditions of men, accompanied with the proper rules of interpretation, was presented to the people.

These two men were not advocating their own peculiar views: they did not at first, desire to found a new denomination: they were interested in, and desired a restoration of Christianity because they thought the movement was a catholic movement. 2

The cause that we advocate is not our own peculiar cause, not the cause of any party, considered as such; it is a common cause, the cause of Christ and our brethren of all denominations. All that we presume, then, is to do what we humbly conceive to be our duty, in connection with our brethren; to each of whom it equally belongs, as to us, to exert himself for this blessed purpose. ........

Moreover, they were interested in the restoration of Christianity, for they could not reconcile the party spirit, denominations, and diversity with anything that was found in the New Testament, as being right and proper for Christians to do. Their proposition was this: restore Christianity to the

2. Charles A. Young, Historical Documents, 92.
to the primitive purity of the New Testament, of New Testament time, and there will be the true Christianity that Christ and the Apostles advocated without the obsolete trappings of human inventions. 1

Moreover, being well aware, from sad experience, of the heinous nature and pernicious tendency of religious controversy among Christians; tried and sick of the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit, we would desire to be at rest; and, were it possible, we would also desire to adopt and recommend such measures as would give rest to our brethren throughout all the churches: as would restore the unity, peace and purity to the whole Church of God.

This desirable rest, however, we utterly despair either to find for ourselves, or to be able to recommend to our brethren, by continuing amid the diversity and rancor of party contentions, the veering uncertainty and clashing of human opinions: or, indeed, can we reasonably expect to find it anywhere but in Christ and his simple word, which is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

In order to show the weakness and unauthoritiveness of creeds or human inventions, A. Campbell writes thus against them. 2

It is argued that confessions of faith are or may be much plainer and much more easy apprehension and comprehension than the oracles of God. Men, then, are either wiser or more benevolent than God. ...........

It is argued that human confessions of faith are necessary to the unity of the Church ... If they are necessary then the New Testament is defective; ... Every human creed is based on inadequacy, that is, the imperfection of the Holy Scriptures. .... Human creeds are composed of the inferences of the human understanding speculating upon the revelation of God. .... The inferences drawn by the human understanding partake of all the defects of that understanding.... This is the reason for contradiction. ... These conclusions, .... are always private property, and can never be placed upon the level with the inspired word. Subscription to them, or acknowledgment of them, can never be rationally required as a bond of union. .... Again, the number of items which enter into those creeds is not amongst the least of their absurdities. .... To attempt to unite upon any other means than the word of the Apostles, by the Westminster, or any other creed, is, then, an attempt to overrule the will of heaven .......

1. Charles A. Young, Historical Documents, 73.
By the use of the Bible as the only authority for Christian faith and practice, the purity and simplicity of the ancient Christian Church was to be revived and reclaimed. All accumulations of human creeds were to be dropped. The Bible only, was to be used.

Very much was wanting, in our present day Christianity, according to the Campbells. Very much was wanting because Christians did not practice primitive Christianity, and hence, neglected to do proper Christian things. And, in the following way, Mr. Campbell gives a list of just what is wanting or lacking in modern Christianity.

In order to show that the restoration to primitive Christianity was both advisable and necessary, the editor of the Harbinger gives five important essentials that are lacking in modern Christianity:

1. There is wanting a more general and particular knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, than is possessed by the great majority of reformers.

2. There is wanting amongst disciples who are heads of families, more attention, much more effort, to bring up their children "in the correction and instruction of the Lord".

3. There is wanting among many disciples a stricter regard to relative duties, ... to all relative duties.

4. There is wanting a more elevated piety to bring up the Christian character to the standard of primitive times.

5. There appears to be wanting a proper method of handling the Scriptures to the edification of the brethren.

To affect such a restoration, or the going back to the Christian primitive standards, alone, there must be an immediate reformation in the Christianity of modern times. Sometimes the terms "reformation and restoration" were used interchangeably. But in order that restoration and reformation might be understood, restoration referred to the return to the simple primitive principles of early Christianity; and reformation was defined or described as an "amendment of what is defective, vicious, corrupt, or depraved". 1

And, this reformation must begin with the exclusion of creeds and confessions, then a return to the Bible which needs no reformation. 2

...of reformed creeds we have already a full library. The only creed which needs no reformation is the Bible. Therefore, we are not the reformers of a creed. The Bible is our creed. .... Our creed needs no reformation.

Why, then, are we called Reformers? We pretend not to reform our neighbors; or our creed ...? Reformation is a good thing; but it is a personal concern, and individual's enterprise, to make himself more intelligent, pure, holy, and happy. .... In this sense, and this sense only, can we be praised, admired, imitated.

But we have acquired great knowledge of the Scriptures!

The reformation must be a reformation in practical life, of daily activities, and must not be a theory only. 3

.... Let us first see the reformation in fact--a reformation in sentiment, in practice--a reformation in faith and manners. ....

All that could be written now, would be rather the history of a struggle for reformation, than the history of the reformation. When it shall have ascertained how far the primitive institutions have been restored, and a gospel reformation effected, it will be time enough to enquire how it was effected.

3. ibid., Series I, Vol. VI, 94f.
Let us, then, every man at his post, do the work of the Lord faithfully, and leave it to others to tell of it; or rather, let us wait the day when every man shall have his praise from God, who judges not after the manner of men and who will most certainly render to every man his proper reward.

The excellence of the nineteenth century reformation was in this one fact, and this one fact only: that was that its prime and only authority was the Bible itself.

Brethren we must excel! We must do more than others. Our standard is the Bible. Theirs is the Bible as explained and set forth by Rome, at Westminster, at Geneva, or at Cambridge—that is, the Bible lowered down in its tone of religion and morality to suit courts and worldly sanctuaries.

... We want much more than the liturgy or the books of discipline framed by the souls of hierarchies, to bring us up to the Christian standard—the Bible alone.

Brethren of the reformation, we want more knowledge of the Scriptures, more faith, more zeal, more liberality, a higher and purer morality. ... We want more devotedness to God which distinguished the first Christians.

If this excellence, the use of the Bible alone, be delayed, Christian disciples are not to be discouraged; for reformation and revolution move slowly until all have had the chance to hear the truth and those who hear the truth have had opportunity to turn to the true authority, the Bible. After all have had a chance to hear God's Holy Word, then, and then only will they turn toward true faith and practice.

Reformation and revolutions at first, move slowly. They have to pass through a severe, if not a firey trial. Many, too, espouse without comprehending them in all their amplitudes and bearings, and, therefore, argue them without due appreciation of their full import, their proximate or remote tendencies, and the proper evidence or means by which they should be sustained and defended.

As the reformation, or restoration, has progressed the principles that began it should in no wise be set aside or dropped. The principles that guide the restoration, or reformation, are always the same.

1. The restoration of a pure speech, or the calling of Bible things by Bible names.

2. The Bible must be proposed as a book of facts not of doctrines, no opinions; it must be understood and regarded as arranged upon the principle of cause and effect, or that action which is produced by corresponding actions.

   Fact is a thing said or done. Testimony is the representation of it in words; faith the belief of those words; feeling the force or power of those words: and action the effect of them.

3. The Bible alone, instead of any human creed, is the only rational and solid foundation of Christian union and communion.

   We have abundantly shown, and all the pages of ecclesiastic history irrefragably show, and so many creeds, so many parties; and every reformation of a human creed has produced a new party in religion.

   (The reformers of the nineteenth century did not intend to establish a new party, or sect; but in time their colleagues and followers were so recognized by other denominations and by the United States government.)

4. The reading and expounding of the sacred Scriptures in public assemblies instead of text preaching, sermonizing, and philosophizing.

   The right of private opinion in all matters not revealed in contradistinction from the common faith, without the forfeiture of Christian character or Christian privilege.

   According to William Joseph Moore, in his Master's thesis in Butler University, Thomas Campbell is the man who laid down these basic principles, and Alexander Campbell became the real leader of the reformation by the faithful use of the important principles ascribed to his father. 1

Thomas Campbell, in Pennsylvania, in 1809 laid down the basis for the Nineteenth Century Reformation in his work, the "Declaration and Address". Alexander Campbell working on the foundation established by his father, became the real leader and was responsible more than any other man for the development and rapid growth of the cause. At the time of his death in 1866 the adherents of the restoration movement numbered about 300,000.

Each and every one of the five principles named above grew out of a desire for reformation, and a desire that the Bible be used to promote unity, instead of a creed being used to promote sects.¹

When we depart from the teaching of the Bible, we may run without rudder or compass into a thousand errors and endless confusion. ... But can our teachers be relied upon? They are teaching different ways. Are they overseers? ... Are they servants? They have made laws for the Master's house. Are they watchmen? They are sleeping, and the Master is about to come to them unawares. Are they shepherds? They have scattered and divided the flock. Are they ambassadors? They come with a different embassy. Are they building a spiritual house unto God? In it there is a confusion of tongues.

We have reviewed the cause of the reformation, diversity and creeds. We have reviewed the guiding principle of the reformation, the Bible alone. The purpose of the reformation was explained in two general aims: first, a return to the original platform of Christianity; second, to establish Christian union.²

Since the time, the first effort known to us to abandon the whole controversy about creeds and reformation, and to restore primitive Christianity, or to build alone upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself, has been made the Chief cornerstone.

Tired of new creeds and new parties in religion, and of the numerous efforts to reform the reformation; convinced from Holy Scriptures, from observation and experience, that the union of the disciples of Christ is essential to the conversion of the world, and that the corrections and improvement of no creed, or partisan establishment in Christendom,

could never be the basis of such a union, communion or cooperation, as would restore peace to a church militant against itself, or triumph to the common salvation; a few individuals, about the commencement of the present century began to reflect upon ways and means to restore primitive Christianity.

In a shorter form the same purposes or aims of the reformation is stated thus: 1

The purposes of the reformation is first, "an immediate return to the broad and original platform of Christianity, as well as true Protestantism: the claims of the Bible alone, as the source of divine truth for all mankind. And pleads for the exercise of man's inalienable right to read and interpret the sacred volume," second, "It seeks to establish a unity of faith; in brief, its great purpose is to establish Christian union upon the basis of simple evangelical Christianity".

The point of view of the Disciples of Christ is definite in its appeal that all Christians hold fast to catholic principles. 2

We do not, therefore propose a single party tenent or dogma; we contend only for that truly catholic Christianity which is not to be qualified or limited with such epithets as Roman, Grecian, English, or American prefixed to it. Equally opposed to the despotic systems of orthodox prescription, and to the latitudinarian wanderings of a too compromising and charitable heterdoxy, we attempt the revival of Christianity which knows neither Jew nor Gentile, .... bond or free. .... We are bold, to express the apostolic communications of supernatural truth in the frank and unscholastic terms of heavenly truth; and to invite all the well tried ancient and venerable foundation of which the Apostles began to rear the evangelical superstructure.

The reformation has its beginning in the family circle—especially in the nursery. For the reformation was to be bloodless reformation based upon the fundamental method of right education. 3

... all true reformation begins in the family circle. The nursery is the place where men and women are moulded; and if the domestic circle be not hallowed by the teachings of parental and maternal piety, Evangelists may preach, and saints may pray, and the church may travail comparatively in vain.

But I must say, that no demonstration is more evident to my mind, that unless more pains be taken to enlighten and sanctify the converted—to build up the believers—and to make the disciples more fruitful in all godliness and righteousness, the cause of reformation will languish, and the great good now being done will fail of perfection and the attainment of the highest end—the formation of character on the principles of faith, hope and love, and with reference to the coming of the Lord and the judgment of the great day.

In addition to the reformation being an educational matter, it is also a personal affair. And if the reformation would come, and come to stay, it must be accepted individually. 1

Reformation, like salvation, is a personal affair. Men are not saved naturally, or constitutionally, but individually; and, therefore, individually they must reform. To reform is "to cease to do evil and to learn to do well" according to the Bible; but, according to the too popular theory, to reform is to change the creed, the party, or the form of church government. But, with us, to repent is to change our views, or to be sorry for the past; but to reform is, first, cease to do evil, and then learn to do well. A reformer, then, first stops—before he begins.

Mr. Campbell admits that there is an apologetic for his way of Christianity. He admits that he himself has helped to form such an apologetic. 2

... There have been issued from our press twelve volumes in illustration and defense of these principles, in hearing and answering objections from all sects, and from many of the most learned and talented men of our country.

The Christian Baptist of seven volumes is the first of these.

... We take the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible as the foundation of all Christian union and communion.

Another apologetic in the same tone appears in the Millennial Harbinger, in defense of the "Bible alone" position. 3

Every new plantation, whether in Texas, Oregon, or California, has already sown in its population the seeds and principles of a great religious and moral revolution.

Still it would seem that the cause of a thorough evangelical reformation, according to the Holy Scriptures, is yet in its infancy. It needs to be watched over, cherished and protected with all paternal care and tenderness. Great principles have been elicited, developed, and established. Still there are now, as in all former times of revolution and change in the elements and order of society, a few reckless adventurers, who, like Jannes and Jambres, or Hymeneus and Philetus of old, seek for glory and renown by opposing those who have been instrumental in effecting these great moral revolutions; endeavoring to erect for themselves, as monumental to their wisdom and genius, a new institution, founded upon some lofty speculation, some daring assumption, or brilliant discovery of their own. 

... Already the characteristic principles of a great religious reformation of the nineteenth century, have been promulgated in some parts of Europe, and throughout almost all the American states and Territories. They have been received by communities as respectable for their intellectual and moral attainments as for their numbers, compared with other denominations of the past or present century.

In conclusion of his remarks on apologetics for the new movement, Mr. Campbell comments briefly on "extremes of the reformation". Such extremes are noticeable in all reformations. 

It is curious to observe how extremes begot extremes in every step of the reformation cause, to the dawn of the present century. The penances, works of faith and supererogation, or the Roman Church, drove Luther and Calvin to the ultraism of "faith alone".

... not until with the present generation did any sect or party in Christendom unite and build upon the Bible alone.

Mr. Campbell comments, in thirteen points, the extremes of the present reformation.

1. A domestic manufactured preacher. One specially called and sent by God alone.

2. Theological schools, with speculative, and pragmatic divinity.

3. Ecclesiastic synods, councils, conclaves, etc.

4. Hierarchs, etc., or other irresponsible masters. The wild congregational democracy of Cromell’s protectorship.

5. A fixed salary for those who deliver orations on the Sabbath. No remuneration whatsoever to those who daily "labor in the word and doctrine".


7. Clerical rule over God’s heritage. No rule or subordination in the church, no one having any authority whatever.

8. A hireling priesthood. No preachers shall receive any annual, monthly or daily stipend.

9. Subscription to creeds, etc., as terms of Christian communion. No disciple shall therefore be enrolled or write his name in any covenant in the temporal affairs of the church.

10. Pharisaic appearance in prayer, and at the Lord’s table in the Christian Church. The brethren ought to scatter themselves all over the congregation, appear as a common mean and avoid every token of devotion.

11. Rich meeting houses. No meeting house at all.

12. Formality, precision, etc. No form, no order, in public worship, but let every one do as seemeth good in his own eyes.

13. The spirit alone changes the heart. The word alone changes the heart.

This concludes the discussion proper on the chapter of the restoration and reformation. We have seen that the aims, purposes, and principles of the reformation were sincere. And the reformation attitude was taken on the authority of the "Bible alone", or rather the interpretation of the Bible, for Mr. Campbell and his followers.

Let us read what Mr. Campbell has to say about two relative problems: The first of these concerns itself with six arguments for church co-operation.¹

1. We can do comparatively nothing in distributing the Bible abroad without co-operation.

2. We can do comparatively but little in the great Missionary field of the world either at home or abroad without co-operation.

3. We can do little or nothing to improve and elevate the Christian ministry without co-operation.

4. We can do but little to check, restrain and remove the flood of imposture and fraud committed upon the benevolence of the brethren by irresponsible, plausible and deceptive persons, without co-operation.

5. We cannot concentrate the action of tens of thousands of Israel, in any great Christian effort, but by co-operation.

6. We can have no thorough co-operation without a more ample, extensive, and thorough church organization.

And because these were the beliefs of Mr. Campbell,² he believed that "there was a great need of a more rational and Scriptural organization". ²

The second of these relative problems concerned itself with the form of a church record.³

The congregation of Jesus Christ at ______, was organized on the ____ day of ____, 18__. It was composed of the following persons: ______. Some of these persons had previously been members of other churches; who, with testimonials of good moral and Christian character, had withdrawn from their respective churches, because of reluctance in those societies, to relinquish human creeds as a bond of union, and a refusal to follow the example of the first churches, in keeping all ordinances delivered by the apostles. In coming together as a congregation, having already been immersed upon a confession of their faith in the Messiah, as the only begotten Son of God: they declared it to be the purpose and determination to acknowledge no leader but Christ; no infallible

2. ibid.,
teachers but the apostles and prophets; and no articles of belief but the Old and New Testaments; and the latter, as containing the faith, and the rules of their behaviour as Christians.

Because Christians did not follow the Bible, reformation was needed. And because Christians did not adhere to Bible teachings, sects, denominations and schisms were started and continued.

The next study is "Sects and Schisms".

Campbell pays tribute to the early reformers, the reformers of the sixteenth century; he also comments upon the fact that after their death there was no one to carry on with their principles. Especially is this true of the Ninety-Five Theses of Luther.

They achieved not only an imperishable fame for themselves but a rich legacy for their posterity. When we contrast the present state of the United States with that of Spain, Portugal and Italy, we begin to appreciate how much we are indebted to the intelligentsia, faith and courage of Martin Luther and his heroes associated in the historic reformation. He taught the Bible to the world. A. W. Lloyd and boldly defended its claims against the hopeless and arrogant pretensions of the saucy and tyrannical Pope in Rome. But, unfortunately, a quick death there was no Prince toward the people......

The heretics were soon converted into a new state religion, and the spirit of the reformation, which was created and inspired, was... pursued by the brutal and fanatical of the Romanists prince, and the collision of civil political interests, both...the continent and in the islands of Europe.

The result of misusing the Bible, and the increasing use of creeds and human inventions, was... new and sects.

Evidently, from the attitude of both Campbells, they thought that they did not need a denomination or sect. For they are pleased as saying that the human inventions forced them out of fellowship with... the Presbyterians and Baptists, many any...
CHAPTER VII

AUTHORITY AND SCHISM AND SECTS

One cause of the nineteenth century reformation has been given, quoted, and numbered time and again in our various previous chapters. That was, that the Bible teaching was not followed for there were few who truly understood just what the Bible meant. Another cause is also evident, for as Mr. Campbell pays tribute to the early reformers, the reformers of the sixteenty century; he also comments upon the fact that after their death there was no one to carry on with their principles. Especially is this true of the heroic Martin Luther.

They achieved not only an imperishable fame for themselves but a rich legacy for their posterity. When we contrast the present state of the United States with Spanish America, and the condition of the English nation with that of Spain, Portugal and Italy, we begin to appreciate how much we are indebted to the intelligence, faith and courage of Martin Luther and his heroic associates in that glorious reformation. He restored the Bible to the world A. D. 1534, and boldly defended its claims against the impious and arrogant pretensions of the haughty and tyrannical See of Rome. But, unfortunately, at his death there was no Joshua to lead the people.

His tenents were soon converted into a new state religion, and the spirit of the Reformation which he excited and inspired were soon quenched by the broils and feuds of the Protestants princes, and the collisions of rival political interests, both on the continent and in the islands of Europe.

The result of misusing the Bible, and the increasing use of creeds and human inventions, was schisms and sects. Evidently, from the attitude of both Campbells, they thought that they did not found a denomination or sect. For they are recorded as saying that the human inventions forced them out of fellowship with both Presbyterians and Baptists. They say

time and again that they have no specific creeds; that the Bible alone is their creed.

But, we have seen that they did teach something other than the accepted Christian teachings in their age. We note that all sects lined up against them, and we have noted their specific teaching in previous pages.

It remains here for the author to show that the Campbells actually separated from their established denomination-al affiliations. This can be done, no matter how much Alexander Campbell defends or apologizes for his action.

William Joseph Moore, in his thesis in Butler University, records this thought in connection with the separation of Thomas Campbell from the Presbytery of Chartiers.¹

... The ring of token, falling upon the plate, announced the instant at which he (Thomas Campbell) renounced Presbyterianism forever—the leaden voucher becoming thus a token not of communion but of separation.

Alexander followed the path of his father, for some years later he withdrew from the Redstone Baptist Association.

And while overlooking his own schismatical action, Alexander Campbell condemns sects and schisms at the greatest of Christian heresies, and commends Christian union as the greatest Christian blessing.²

Schisms are matters strongly reprobated in the Christian Scriptures. That they may be guarded against with due care, they must be contemplated and understood in their true and proper Scriptural attributes.

... Schism may then exist where there is the most perfect agreement in faith, in doctrine, in all religious tenents. Undue attachment to certain persons, to the disparities, are the true elements of schism or division as it appeared in Corinth, ......

¹. William Joseph Moore, Thesis in Butler University, 49.
A union is formed on Christian principles, ... a union with Christ and his people, in views, sentiments, feelings, aims and pursuits—a real co-partnership for eternity—almost annihilated individuality itself, and inseparably cemented into one spirit all the genuine members of Christ's body.

... Heresies, strictly and literally indicative of choice or option, is Anglicized heresy, and properly rendered sect or faction, and by implication discord and contention. ... In the Acts of the Apostles we have rendered it..."Why did Paul defend himself from the accusation of Tertullus as indication censure? If sects among the Jews were such harmless and inoffensive things"?

... These preferences violated that unity, that oneness of heart, essential to one body in Christ; and that led to parties in the church, displayed in the manner they celebrated the supper. The same spirit in other communities ultimately led to visible separations and distinct sects, as among the professing members of Christ's body today. ....

Sects are the egress of corruptions. ... But the great mass of sectaries are following, as they imagine, Jesus Christ and his Apostles, under the name and tenets of Luther, Calvin, Wesley, etc. They are, without knowing it, the mere followers of men; for they examine nothing for themselves by a constant and habitual reference to the Bible. ....

Thus giving the weaknesses of sects and schisms, A. Campbell progresses to the point where he tells of the excellence of the Christian party which, he declares, is not a sect or schism, but the true church.

The Christian party is "built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, and on Jesus the Messiah, himself the chief cornerstone", and therefore on the Christian Scriptures alone; not, indeed, as contradistinguished from the Jewish, but as the development and full revelation of all that concerns Christ and His kingdom contained in those Scriptures. Now, all other parties that are in any way diverse from the Christian party are built upon some alloy—some creed, formula, or human institution supplementary to the apostolic laws and customs. For, truth is built upon the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.

The charge of being a sect is never leveled at themselves but always to other leaders and other denominations outside of their own leaders and denomination. And since those outside of their own Christian group are not absolutely right, for they cannot be right unless they accept the Bible alone, the Campbells suggest a cure for evils of sectarianism. For party spirit the Campbells suggest Christ's spirit; and for creeds, which are said to foster party spirit, the Campbells suggest "the Bible alone".

Because the opposing sects and denominations refused to accept the Bible alone, Alexander Campbell in defense of his views, as he referred to them, catholic views, was forced to condemn the platforms and creeds of the various sects as narrow.

There is no platform in any of the great sects of Christendom on which to rear this glorious superstructure. (Christian union). They are all too narrow and too weak... The foundation on which every sect is reared, is a certain class of opinions, inferences, or deductions from the Scripture promises, as they pretend, or what some call doctrines, the essential doctrines of Christianity.

We assume it for a principle, -- that the union of Christians, and the destruction of sects, are indispensable prerequisites to the subjection of the world to the government of Jesus, and to the triumphant appearance of Christ's religion in the world. Few can unite on creeds. To be substituted for creeds are the gospel facts upon Scripture evidence. All Christian sects acknowledge the same gospel facts. If the gospel facts are all believed, and the authority of Jesus Christ regarded, we have every thing which Christianity presents to redeem, save, purify and happy the world.

All that the world needs to its happiness and all that is necessary to bring us into the millennial enjoyment, will be to have the ancient gospel and the ancient order of things clearly, fully and faithfully propounded to us.

Both of the Campbells had tried to unite with sects but both had failed. For they could not, and would not, believe that any sect contained the whole truth. When they withdrew from the Presbyterian group and the Baptist group they tried hard to put the blame for the separation on the group which they left. But, the sect, to be true to its principles, could not give in; nor could the Campbells. The blame lies with neither one nor the other, but with both. Read as Alexander writes in defense of his action.

So fully were we aware of the evils of schism, and so reluctant to assume the attitude of a new party, that we proposed to continue in the Presbyterian connexion, even after we were convinced of the various imperfections in the form of its government, in its system of discipline, in its administration of Christian ordinances, and of the want of scriptural warrant for infant baptism; provided only, they would allow us to follow out our convictions by not obligating us to do what we could not approve, and allowing us to teach and enforce only those matters for which we could produce a clear Scriptural authority, and make all the rest a subject of forbearance till further enlightened.

Mr. Campbell tried to unite with the Baptists but failed. There was no quarrel about Bible facts; they were accepted by both sides. But difficulties arose just as soon as the value of human traditions and opinions were discussed. There was soon a split. Mr. Campbell then proceeded through the years to establish a church, a following, and a college, in which and through which his views and the views of his father were taught. The Disciples of Christ are not alone recognized as a denomination or sect by other denominations, but they are so regarded by the United States Government, Bureau of Statistics.

It was somewhat unfair of the Great Reformer to lay all the blame of narrowness and schism on the shoulders of the Presbyterians and Baptists; for they were as sincere in their belief, and followed it, as he was in his.

That Mr. Campbell was sincere that he had re-discovered the truth, and the only truth, cannot be doubted. In many places we read of his sincere utterances; in fact, he lived by the principle he preached; and the reason he hated sects was, that the ultimate result was discord and strife among Christians. But, we cannot read through a volume of the periodical, the Harbinger, without discovering that he was intolerant, spread strife and discord among Christians, because he refused to give up the position that was more than life to him. Even at the close of his life, he again vowed to remain true to the great guiding principles that he had accepted in the year 1809.

The peak of his intolerance is reached when creeds were propounded or defended. The reformation for which we plead grew out of a conviction of the enormous evils of schism and partyism, and the first document ever printed by any of the co-operants in the present effort, was upon the subject of necessity, practicability, and excellency of Christian Union and communion, in order to the purification and extension of the Christian profession.

The abjuration of human creeds as roots of bitterness and apples of discord—as the permanent causes of all sectarianism, was set forth as a preliminary step to the purification of the church and the conversion of the world. The restoration of pure speech, or the giving of Bible names to Bible ideas, followed in its train, and from these starting points we have been led, step by step, to our present position, each one of the prime movers adding to the common stock something of importance, until matters have issued in one of the most extensive moral and ecclesiastic movements and revolutions of the present age. Quietly advancing step by step through hosts of opponents, without any other aid

1. Alex. Campbell, ed. Millennial Harbinger, Series III, Vol. IV, 253-4
than the calm, bold, persevering, argumentative efforts of those who had been long devoted to the Bible alone, as the only volume of authority and revelation adequate to all the wants of the church and world.

We have read that A. Campbell disliked creeds, schism and sects; and yet while he disapproved of hostile sects, he founded a denomination, sect, or church which grew in numbers to 300,000 before the death of their leader and founder.

Near the end of his life Mr. Campbell gave his own position in the matter of sect and schism, and by what authority he was forced to believe this view.1

Against all these enormities (sects) we have more or less, remonstrated for more than forty years. And what have we substituted for them? Aye! This is the question. Have we introduced a new system? Have we presented a new theory and new doctrine?

No such thing has ever been intended. No such project has ever been submitted by us. If anyone has hardihood to affirm that we have, we call upon him for the day and the date—the time and the place—where? In which of our public and published discussions? In what essay? On what page? We challenge all our contemporaries.

This assertion is nobly concluded with the following words: 2

...From our first published sermon on the law, A. D. 1816, before the Redstone Baptist Association, till this present hour, December 12th, A. D. 1857, we have never offered one substitute for the New Testament, as a Church Constitution, term or terms of membership, communion and co-operation.

Whether or not this assertion is absolutely true depends upon the point of view one takes when reading over the material already submitted in this thesis. From the author's point of view, Mr. Campbell did offer something to his followers, and for that matter, to all the world, in addition to the New Testament.

1. A. Campbell, ed. Millennial Harbinger, Series III Vol. IV, 253-4
2. ibid., Series V, Vol. I, 5
CHAPTER VIII

AUTHORITY AND THE THEOLOGY OF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

Mr. Campbell was far more interested in practical theology than he was in speculative theology. Nevertheless he had a background of speculative theology which helped him to form and carry out his practical.

His speculation theological views were orthodox Calvanistic views. 1

His theological views were orthodox Calvanistic doctrine, except on matters such as baptism, church polity, wherein he was led to a change of position by following the principles "where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent". 2

And although his contribution to the Christian world was in the field of practical Christianity, it is well that we study his theological background.

God the Father was revealed in creation, mainly, for "nature displays the knowledge, wisdom, power and goodness of God". 2

Christ the Son was the Messiah, Lord, and Light of the world. 3 And Christ redeemed or atoned for all people because "he was a real and sufficient sacrifice for sin". Through him and him alone we have eternal life. 4

The Holy Spirit is one of the divine trinity, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit". "To us Christians there is then, but one God, even the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, even the Saviour, and one Spirit, even the Advocate, the Sanctifier, and the Comforter of Christ's body, the Church." 5

1. William Joseph Moore, Thesis in Butler University, 76.
3. ibid., 52 ff.
4. ibid., 37 ff.
5. ibid., 24 ff.
In his anthropology Mr. Campbell emphasized the fact that man was at one time perfect, then rebelled against God, and fell. He can only become perfect again through belief and the following of Christ. 1 And since man is a free moral being he can make the right choice to accept Christ as his Lord and Master and be saved.

Mr. Campbell's biggest contribution in the field of theology lay in the field of ecclesiology. He approved of congregationalism. 2 When the church was necessary as a Christian educational institution. Membership in the Church of Christ was for all regenerated men or women who confessed Christ to be their Saviour and were immersed. 2 These members were to accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. Discipline as to be administered by the congregation, which was the supreme unit in the Christian Church. 4

In eschatology he held to the hope of pardon for the righteous. The wicked would be punished because they had earned the sentence of punishment by their own wilful actions. 5 He also looked forward to the time when the millennium of peace would come upon earth.

In summary of his own views he says, "We build on a sure foundation when we affirm that -- the Grace of God is the originating cause, the sacrifice of Christ, the meritorious cause, faith, repentence and baptism, the instrumental causes of a sinner's salvation--the fruits of which are righteousness, holiness, and peace." 6

3. *ibid.* 77 ff.
4. *ibid.*, 97.
5. *ibid.*, 73 ff.
6. 6 *ibid.*, 77

But in spite of his views of theology being important to him, they were in no wise to be forced upon others, except as his intelligent influence dominated the lives of his followers.  

Alexander Campbell's theology is just his own private theological view. It is interesting as a subject of study because it is that of a very intelligent and a very influential man. ...  

But he was not content or happy to stay in the realm of speculative theology. Rather, much rather would he always labor in the field of practical theology. He liked the thought of common sense and reason, though he did not approve of their use in a speculative way.  

To him all religion was based upon common sense facts.  

All revealed religion is based upon facts. Testimony has respect to the facts only; and that testimony may be credible, it must be confirmed. ... By facts we mean something said or done. .... by words of God, or things done and spoken by God, are those facts which are laid down and exhibited (by him) in the Bible as the foundation of all faith, hope, love, piety, and humanity.  

Again, the only fact true in religion was the fact based upon a statement made which could be substantiated with a "Thus saith the Lord". 3 In three statements he gives his position with regard to this well known phrase: 4  

We fraternally beseech all good men, who hold our common faith and our common hope, to come over and help us; promising to surrender everything for which we cannot produce a "thus saith the Lord", either in express terms or by approved precedent, and "to contend earnestly for the faith formerly delivered to the saints".  

We have most happily substituted facts for fable a "thus saith the Lord" for a "Thus saith the church", or its rules, and faith for opinion and tradition.  

This is the sin of popularized sects of the present century. For protesting against these and substituting for them a palæol "thus saith the Lord", in express precepts or by most legitimate precedents, we have been subjected to the unmitigated censure and reprobation of many of the Lords and self-created Rabbis and doctors of the present secularized forms and ceremonies of sectionized partisan Christendom.

So ends the record of the theology of Alexander Campbell as it began, with the Bible. This was the contribution of the great reformat, that he held always to the Bible alone. Maybe straying occasionally in his speculative defense, but always practicing the Word of God to the letter and in the Spirit. Ever intolerant in its behalf. Ever tolerant when its authority remained unquestioned.

CHAPTER IX
AUTHORITY AND UNION AND UNITY

The end, the purpose, and the fulfillment of the work of the Campbells was hope for a universal Christian union. This view was taken from the prayer of Christ for his disciples, in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of St. John.

Union is defined as "a whole formed by uniting elements previously separated". Unity is defined as "the state of being indivisibly one".¹

For A. Campbell, Christian unity was to be the result of being faithful to the Bible alone instead of being faithful to party creeds and human inventions. Christian union would be completed when all denominations, sects and schisms received the Bible and the Bible alone as their only rule of faith and conduct. When all Christians accept Christ, accept the Bible alone, and the ordinance of immersion, then will Christian Union be universal in its scope.²

The one fact is, that Jesus the Nazarene is the Messiah. The evidence upon which it is to be believed is the testimony of twelve men, confirmed by prophecy, miracles, and spiritual gifts. ....

The witnesses agree that whosoever confesses that Jesus is the Christ, and is baptized, should be received into the Church .... and not an instance can be produced of any person being asked for any other faith.

1. Alex. Campbell, ed., The Christian Baptist, 60
the reformers had some cause to attack sectarianism, for it is a matter of historical record that the sects placed the ism above Christ and Christian living. The reformers declared themselves to be of this sentiment; 1

We, the undernamed disciples of the primitive apostolic gospel of Jesus Christ, meeting in _____ &c., declare:

1st. That considering the disunion, disaffection and discord, so generally prevailing amongst the professors of Christianity, in direct opposition to the most express declarations of the divine will, and to the manifest subversion of the benign and blissful intentions of our holy religion, feel in duty bound by the divine authority, to have no fellowship with those destructive evils, by conscientiously abstaining from the evil causes which have produced them, and which still continue to keep them up; namely, teaching and practicing the doctrines and commandments of men; and making their inferences and opinions articles of faith and terms of communion; against all which unauthorized and ruinous practices we enter our humble and earnest protest; taking the Divine Word alone as the only and all-sufficient rule and expression of our faith and obedience.

2nd. That thus taking the Holy Scriptures alone, as the only perfect and all-sufficient expression of divine will, it is our earnest desire and sincere intention, to reduce them to practice; and so to make a rule of them, and be ruled by them; that we may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God—be made wise to salvation, thoroughly fitted for every good work.

3rd. That we heartily approve and fellowship all, as the genuine and approved disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, who conscientiously and dutifully disapproving of the above evils, take the Holy Scriptures alone, as the only and adequate rule and expression of their faith and duty; and so make it their constant and diligent study, night and day to understand believe and obey them.

Thomas Campbell.

this was the belief of the father; and the son had like beliefs. 2

No church has a right to require any other condition of admission to its fellowship and privileges than that on which Christ receives and fellowships individuals. And that condition is simple faith in Him. This, then, is the only authorized condition of church fellowship and communion in Christ's house. All other conditions are unauthorized. ....

We have seen to receive all whom Christ receives, is the supreme law of the Church. To deviate from this, and form a sect among Christians on account of certain diversities of opinion on points not essential to salvation, is the heresy of the Bible.

The authority for such a stand is in the Bible, according to the interpretation of the reformers. The Christian world will either progress or fall, on the proposition which is basic in Christian union, --that is, "the prime authority of the Bible alone".

And because the Bible is a sufficient authority and because it needs the help of no human authority, creeds are objectionable. Besides, they are not necessary for Christian union or unity; they prevent rather than help.

1. No real benefit can be derived from them (creeds). They do not keep error from the Church.
2. Their tendency is only evil.
3. There is no divine warrant for their use.
4. They are fruits of an unauthorized and sinful legislation in the Church.
5. They supersede the Bible.
6. They tend most powerfully to perpetuate the enormous evils of sectarianism.
7. They eject the real Christian from the Church.
8. They prevent the real Christians from coming to church.
9. They prevent an increase of Scripture knowledge.
10. They are invariably made by the few, and imposed on the many.
11. A desirable Christian union cannot be effected while they hold their present place in the Church.
12. It is rebellion against the great Head of the Church to retain them.

1. Alex. Campbell, ed., Millennial Harbinger, Series II, Vo. 11, 63ff.
In spite of the above objections to creeds, Mr. Campbell constantly invited all Christians of any religious affiliation to join the Disciples of Christ. He begged all Christians to give up false opinions and accept the truth. 1 This appeal is something similar to the appeal for Church Union extended by the Holy Father at Rome, year by year. The difference is, that the Catholics demand that Christians unionize in a Roman Catholic way or mode; and the Disciples demand that Christians unionize in accordance with their views. Both Catholic and Disciples believe and teach that their own interpretation of the truth in the Bible is the only universal truth there is. The invitation of the reformers did read as follows: 2 "The olive branch of peace is held out to all religious parties, and it is hoped they will act as becomes those who have submitted themselves to the King of peace, love and joy".

But no matter how much they extended this peaceful branch, they condemned the sect to which the religious believer belonged, and not that alone, but he had to give up those principles upon which his religious belief rested, and accept in their stead a new interpretation.

... If the schism now existing between them and us be sin against the Lord of all, against the constitution, peace, dignity and prosperity of the Christian Kingdom, it lies not at our door. We have given to the world, to heaven and earth, a fresh pledge that we are for peace, union, and cooperation with all who live the kingdom and the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ......

3. ibid., 263 ff.
The adoption of the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing else but the naked Book of God, as the expression of our faith, the guide of our worship, and the code of our morals, .........

... that sect can never unite...... the only idea that can enter the brain of a true sectarian is, amalgamation with a party ...... It is only on the Bible that good men in all parties can unite.

Mr. Campbell was constantly submitting proposals for Church union and the authority of the Bible alone. And always he approached in somewhat the following manner, 1

All true Christians bear the fruit of the Spirit, and should act in harmony, using as much as possible, bible terms on all subjects treated of in the Holy Oracles, and submitting to all the ordinances of the gospel precisely as Christ and the Apostles taught and practiced. This will bring about unity in faith and practice, the object and glorious result of which would be the conversion of the world in accordance with the prayer of our divine Redeemer in the 17th Chapter of John.

The essential for Christian Union has been given again and again in the course of the paper. In order to bring them again to our mind let us recall the opinion, which opinion also was held to, and in fact, established by Thomas Campbell: 2 "......the Bible alone is a sufficient rule of faith and manners, and all true Christians can be united upon it: ...."

To review in summary the Christian Union position, we must recall the position of Thomas Campbell when he wrote the following plea for such a union: 3

Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the church, or to be made a term of communion amongst Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament. Nor ought anything be admitted as of divine obligation in the church constitution and management but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles upon the New testament church; either in "express terms" or "approved precedent".

CHAPTER X
A DEFINITE POSITION GAINED FROM THE VIEWS
OF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

Without attempting a long historical survey, we will record the position which came as a result of the influence of A. Campbell, and which was compiled by Isaac Erret. This position was the position of the Disciples of Christ, who claimed to have no creed, no human invention, except the Bible alone.

The general or catholic conceptions of "Our Position" as compiled by Isaac Erret were thirteen in number, given as follows:


3. The alone-sufficiency and all sufficiency of the Bible, as a revelation of the divine character and will, and of the Gospel of grace by which we are saved; and as a rule of faith and practice.

4. The divine excellency and worthiness of Jesus as the Son of God.

   a. The incarnation of the Logos—the eternal word of God—in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

   b. The life and teachings of this divinely anointed Lord and Saviour, as the highest and completest unfolding of divine character and purposes, as they relate to our sinful and perishing race, and as an end of controversy touching all questions of salvation, duty and destiny.

The death of Jesus as a sin-offering, bringing us redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

d. His ascension to heaven, etc.

e. His supreme authority as Lord of all.

5. The personal perpetual mission of the Holy Spirit, to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and to dwell in believers as their Comforter, Strengthenener, and Sanctifier.

6. The alienation of the race from God, and their entire dependence on the truth, mercy, and grace of God as manifested in Jesus, the Christ, and revealed and confirmed to us by the Holy Spirit in the gospel, for regeneration, sanctification, and adoption, and eternal life.

7. The necessity of faith and repentance in order to the enjoyment of salvation here, and of a life of obedience in order to the attainment of everlasting life.

8. The perpetuity of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as divine ordinances, through all ages to the end of time.

9. The obligation to observe the first day of the week as the Lord's day, in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, by acts of worship such as the New Testament teaches, and by spiritual culture such as befits this memorial day.

10. The church of Christ, a divine institution, composed of such as, by faith and baptism, have openly confessed the name of Christ; with its appointed rulers, ministers and services, for the edification of Christians and the conversion of the world.

11. The necessity of righteousness, benevolence and holiness on the part of professed Christians, alike in view of their own final salvation, and of their mission to turn the world to God.

12. The fullness and freeness of the salvation offered in the gospel to all who accept it on the terms proposed.

13. The final punishment of the ungodly by the everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.
The peculiar conceptions of "Our Position" are nine in number. 1

1. Both Old and New Testaments are inspired, but the New Testament is the authority for Christians.

2. There is a belief in three personalities, but the theological speculations of Trinitarians and Unitarians are disregarded.

3. The Bible furnishes all-sufficient revelation of the divine will, and there is a repudiation of all authoritative creeds.

4. Divinity of Christ is the central truth of the Christian system.

5. We require no assent to the theory of regeneration, or of spiritual influence.

6. We submit no other tests but faith and repentance, in admitting persons to baptism and church membership.

7. Sacraments are for the purpose of divine assurance of forgiveness of sins.

8. The Lord's day is the New Testament observance.

9. The church of Christ, --not sects--is a Divine institution.

This is the end of the thesis. The study has been made, and the record of the original material has been selected and classified. It is unnecessary to mention that the author does not always concur with Mr. Campbell in all of his definitions, assumptions, presuppositions or solutions to the problem. For instance, the author does not believe that the Bible is the only revelation God made to man. He does believe that the Bible was a revelation of God to man, and that it was inspired, and that it is our rule for faith and practice. But he does not believe that Mr. Campbell's

interpretation of it, or his rules of interpretation, necessarily have precedence over other interpretations or other rules of interpretations.

This comparison could go on and on; but comparison is not the task of the paper, but the problems concerning authority in the theology of Alexander Campbell.

As far as Mr. Campbell is concerned, the problems of authority were always, in the beginning of his ministry and at the end of it, centered about the authority of the Bible and the Bible alone.
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