

Courtesy of Albert Wardin

## JOHN LORNE CAMPBELL

### Albert W. Wardin Jr.

**J**ohn Lorne Campbell (1845–1928) was a noted Baptist pastor, educator, author, lecturer, apologist, mission advocate, and world traveler. In a career that spanned a remarkable sixty years of full active service, he ministered not only among his native Canadian Baptists but also among both Northern Baptists and Southern Baptists in the United States and Baptists in England.

Campbell was born 14 January 1845, in Dominionville, Glengarry County, Ontario, Canada, located in southeastern Ontario in the wedge of territory between Quebec and the United States. He was the second of nine children of Peter and Flora (McLean) Campbell, both of whom were reared in the highlands of Scotland. His grandfather, Malcolm Campbell, emigrated in 1818 from Scotland to Canada. The family spoke Gaelic in the home.

Campbell was reared on a farm, and his early education was in country schools. He taught school for two years. With money saved from his teaching, he entered the Canadian Literary Institute (later called Woodstock College) in Woodstock, Ontario. The institute was a young school that had only opened in 1860. At the institute, Campbell was converted to the Christian faith.

The year 1868 was particularly memorable for Campbell. First, he graduated from the institute. Second, he was ordained on 14 August at the Baptist church in Chatham, Ontario. Third, he became pastor of this church, which was organized that very day. Fourth, on 27 August, he married Margaret (Maggie) McIntyre of Dominionville, the daughter of Archibald and Janet (McCallum) McIntyre.

In 1876, after eight years in Chatham, Campbell became pastor of the Baptist church in Dundas, Ontario. After serving two years, he moved in 1878 to the Saint Catherine Street Baptist Church of Montreal where he was pastor for only one year. In 1879, he assumed his fourth Canadian pastorate at the Baptist church in Cheltenham.

Campbell gave strong support to the fledgling foreign mission movement of Canadian Baptists. He was present at the Regular Baptist Missionary convention of Ontario's historic meeting in Ingersoll in 1867 when further mission support was raised and a farewell given to the first Canadian missionaries, A. V. Timpany and his wife, who went to the Telugu field in India. They went as missionaries of the Canadian Auxiliary to the American Baptist Missionary Union. In 1870, the Canadian Auxiliary became the Regular Baptist Foreign Missionary Society of Canada, supported by Baptists in Ontario and Quebec. Two years later, Campbell became its secretary. In 1874, Canadian Baptists established their own mission field at Kakinada (then spelled Cocanada) in the northern section of Telugu territory. At the jubilee celebration in 1924, Campbell gave two messages, one a reminiscent address, as an elder statesman of the Canadian foreign mission enterprise.

Upon his move in 1879 to the Cheltenham pastorate, he resigned his position as secretary of the Foreign Missionary Society. Since Cheltenham was just north of Toronto, he could then attend the University of Toronto. In 1883, he received his B.A. degree with first honors in the classics. In 1899, McMaster University admitted him to the degree B.A. *ad eundem gradum*.

### **The American Pastorates, 1884–1915**

In 1884, Campbell left Canada for a pastorate in the United States, which was then followed by two additional American pastorates. In this period, Campbell reached the height of his career as a pastor and author. During this time, two institutions conferred on him the doctor of divinity degree: Central University of Iowa (1893) and McMaster University (1907).

Campbell's first American pastorate was at First Baptist Church of Nyack, just north of New York City on the Hudson River. When he left in 1888, the church had reached up to that time its highest level of growth.

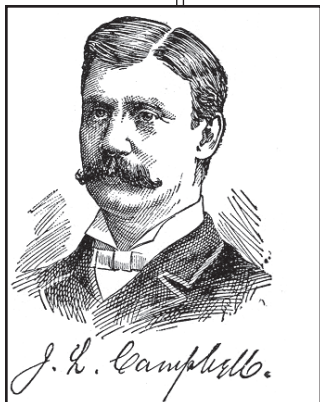
After a short period in mission work in Brooklyn, he accepted in 1889 a call from the Lexington Avenue Baptist Church in Manhattan in New York City. Although the church was in decline in members and finances and neighboring pastors warned



Courtesy of Carson-Newman College

*John Lorne Campbell*

him that the field was most difficult because of the large influx of Jewish and Roman Catholic immigrants, he took the challenge.



*National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*

**John Lorne Campbell**  
*sketch from National*  
**Cyclopedia of**  
**American Biography**

Under his ministry the church began to flourish, becoming a leading Baptist church in the city. Seating became inadequate for the crowds wishing to attend, and at times large numbers were turned away.

Because of the variety of its program, the church was open almost every afternoon and evening. The church's weekly bulletin in July 1902 recorded Sunday worship services morning and evening, prayer meetings Sunday morning and evening, a junior Christian Endeavor, a Bible class, and in the afternoon a Sunday School. On Mondays, the pastor conducted an enquiry meeting. On Fridays, a Forget-me-not Mission Band met in the afternoon and a prayer meeting in the evening. On Saturday afternoons, the church sponsored an industrial school. During his vacation in 1898, Campbell led a large group through Egypt, Greece, Italy, and

other European areas.

Although unassuming, Campbell's wife, Maggie, proved to be of great assistance. She was described at this time as "an indefatigable worker" and was president of the ladies' aid society, leader of the King's Daughter Circle, and a member of the board of managers of an Old People's Home.

In 1895, Campbell reported that conversions occurred almost weekly, and baptisms were performed almost each Sunday. In 1902, the church recorded almost 1,100 members. During his fifteen years at the church, he received 1,362 members, 869 by baptism. Because of his prominence, the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* included a biographical article on him with his bust and signature.

His final American pastorate was at the First Baptist Church of Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he served over ten years from February 1905 to September 1915. At his tenth anniversary the church had over 1,000 members; up to that time he had received 864 members of whom 478 were received by baptism. He attracted students from Harvard University in his class in the Bible school. During the Sunday morning service, he would give a short sermon to the children. Besides conducting a weekly Bible institute at the church, for two years he taught a Bible course at Gordon Bible College. In 1906, the Canadian Club in Boston elected him chaplain.

While pastor in Cambridge, he opposed the open member-

ship policy of the Lincoln Park Baptist Church of West Newton. The Lincoln Park church began accepting as members individuals who had not been immersed as believers. In an address on open membership at the meeting of the Boston North Baptist Association in 1908, Campbell maintained the church had removed itself from the association by abrogating one of the association's fundamental tenets. He feared that such action would cause churches, as he believed was happening in England, to lose their Baptist character and the reason for the Baptist denomination to exist as a distinct body.



<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/dd/MetropolitanTabernacleSouth.jpg>

***Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle, London,  
where Campbell preached***

Campbell did not confine his preaching to American pulpits but in the summer also preached in London. In 1923, he crossed the Atlantic Ocean seventeen times. He apparently first preached in the Ewing Street Baptist Church in London in 1899 and 1901 and also possibly in 1902 if not elsewhere. Other reports record his preaching at Spurgeon's Tabernacle and at Peckham Rye.

Campbell was an outstanding pulpiteer with oratorical skills. The *Watchman-Examiner* in 1914 characterized him as one who had "the true Scotch evangelical and evangelistic fervor." His preaching was centered on the gospel; he never introduced any political issues.

Charles W. Pope, a leading Tennessee pastor who later became executive secretary of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and who knew Campbell only in his later life, declared, "No one who ever heard Dr. Campbell preach could doubt for one moment that there were deep and abiding convictions in his life to which his very soul was anchored."

He served as his own evangelist. C. C. McLaurin, a fellow Canadian pastor, remembered when Campbell was a pastor in Chatham and Cheltenham that he would hold evangelistic services each year, preaching himself each night for weeks without using an evangelist or another pastor. In Cambridge, he frequently held evangelistic services, doing his own preaching. For example, after conducting evangelistic services in December, 1913, he preached another series the following February. One of his revivals brought in 224 additions with most of them



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***First Baptist Church, Vancouver,  
British Columbia***

Luke and his writings. In 1901, he published “Our Martyred President”—a memorial sermon and an eloquent eulogy on the assassination of President William McKinley.

The printed sermons portray an excellent command of the English language in sentence structure, vocabulary, and narration. The messages also exhibit his mastery of biblical knowledge as well as historical and geographical data. He appealed to the mind with logical argument as well as to the emotions but avoided cheap sentimentality.

In 1901, he produced a treatise, *Sanctification*, which was followed in 1908 by *The Patmos Letters*, a work dedicated to his wife. The latter work, aside from two introductory sections, was composed of a study of the letters to the seven churches in the *Revelation* with application for his own day. In this work, he made his own translation from the Greek and used W. M. Ramsay’s work, *The Letters to the Seven Churches*, for geographical and historical background. The work was enhanced with photographs procured from James P. McNaughton, a missionary friend who lived in Smyrna, today Izmir, Turkey.

**The Golden Years**

In 1915, when he was seventy years old, he accepted the urgent call of the First Baptist Church of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, to be its pastor. He now returned to his native land, which was then with the rest of the British Empire in the midst of the First World War. Times were difficult economically,

by baptism.

Campbell was a contributor to religious publications and a writer of several books. His first book, *Heavenly Recognition and Other Sermons*, appeared in 1895. It was a collection of sermons he preached at the Lexington Avenue Church and was dedicated to his young daughter, Maybell Aileen, who had died the previous year. It is therefore not surprising that the collection included sermons on personal recognition of loved ones in heaven and on death and resurrection. In addition, a number of sermons dealt with the uniqueness of the person and teachings of Christ with one devoted to an exposition of

and the church was seriously in debt. He impressed his audiences with his height, snow-white hair, energy, and his powerful evangelical preaching. As in the U.S.A., crowds came to hear him. Even during the terrible influenza epidemic in 1918 when all public meetings were disallowed, he gave words of encouragement to members who gathered on Sunday mornings on the steps of the church. In 1918, the church celebrated both the fiftieth anniversary of Campbell's ordination and the golden anniversary of his marriage. In the following year, he resigned. He left the church much strengthened in numbers and had helped to save its property, which might have been lost by debt.



Courtesy of Carson-Newman College

***Campbell in classroom at Carson-Newman.  
Note the pictures of leading Baptists from the past.***

Almost immediately after leaving the Vancouver pastorate, Campbell embarked on a remarkable ten-month missionary and evangelistic tour around the world. He traveled about 32,000 miles with 17,000 miles and seventy-three days on the sea. He visited mission fields in Japan, Korea, China, Burma, and India, speaking over 260 times at Bible conferences and schools, including colleges and seminaries. In India in the Telugu field, he spoke at the annual sessions of the American Baptist Telugu mission and the Canadian Telugu mission. He also stopped in England where again he preached in Baptist pulpits. He returned to New York on 1 March 1920, on the steamer *Carmania*. In spite of his age, he never was ill nor missed a meal or an appointment on the entire trip.

Although seventy-five years of age, Campbell accepted in the fall of 1920 the position of dean of the Bible Department and professor of Bible at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee. He again met success. In an article in April 1923, the *Orange and Blue*, student publication of the college, was effusive in its praise of Campbell for his scholarship, teaching ability, and Christian character. The article noted that the department,

#### ALMA MATER

Carson-Newman, how I love thee,  
Alma Mater Hail;  
Orange and Blue wave high above thee  
Through the calm and gale.

Long thy sons have sung thy praises  
And thy name adored,  
While their hearts its jubal raises;  
Carson-Newman evermore.

Years have crowned thy head with glory  
And thy sons have told  
All the great and thrilling story  
Of the deeds of old.

Upward was thy grand endeavor  
Which thy founder knew  
Hail the victors doubting never,  
Hail the Orange and Blue.

by John L. Campbell

Courtesy of Carson-Newman College

#### *Carson-Newman's Alma Mater written by Campbell*

##### *Bible Under Fire.*

Campbell did not confine his activities to the classroom and the study. Almost each weekend, he preached in some pulpit or spoke to a Bible class. In 1922, he led in reorganizing the campus Ministerial Association that generally met weekly to discuss questions related to the ministry. Shortly after his death, the Ministerial Association was renamed The J. L. Campbell Association of Ministers. Campbell was also a sponsor of the Definite Service Band, organized during the 1925–26 school year, composed of students looking forward to foreign mission service. In 1927, Campbell presented a stereoptican lecture on William Carey at a meeting of the school's Volunteer Band to which members of the Definite Service Band were invited. Campbell wrote two songs for the college—"Carson-Newman, How I love Thee" and "Alma Mater."

While at Carson-Newman, he spent five days in a preaching mission at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, that resulted in many personal decisions, including commitments to the foreign mission field. Although in his eighties, in the summers of 1927 and 1928, he served as pastor of the Central Baptist Church in Manhattan, where his children and grandchildren were members.

Campbell was a fellow of the Society of Science, Letters and Arts in London. In 1923, Temple University conferred on him a third doctor of divinity degree.

which then had over 260 students, had grown significantly under his leadership.

Even though advanced in age, he maintained his pace as a tireless worker and continued his scholarly pursuits. He insisted that a Christian college should maintain high academic standards; for his own department he declared, "Bible courses should not be a joke or a 'soft snap'." He placed on the walls of his classroom portraits of leading Baptists from the past as well as religious pictures. In addition, he displayed a chart on the tabernacle and one on the chronology of the Old Testament he had produced and which was sold at the college. On display in a glass case were a number of items from the Middle East and Mediterranean world he and his wife had collected. Shortly before his death, he published his final book, *The*

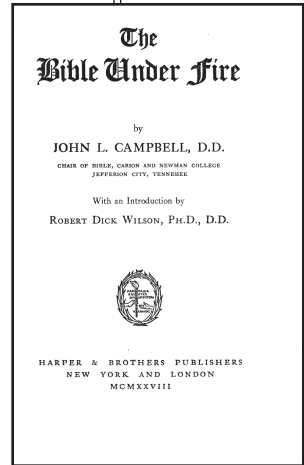
## Defender of the Faith

Campbell ministered at a time when it appeared that the orthodoxies of his youth were under severe attack from the higher critics of Scripture and proponents of evolution. Although not pugnacious by nature and always gracious and approachable, he nevertheless felt the necessity to defend the verities of the faith. His approach was to use logical discourse; he avoided innuendo, sarcasm, and emotional appeal. He was committed to the supernatural character of Christianity, to the integrity of Scripture, and God's special creation of humans.

His first published work, *Heavenly Recognition and Other Sermons*, upheld the uniqueness of Christ and the originality of His teaching. In the *Patmos Letters*, he attempted to convey the thought that the letters to the seven churches were relevant for the churches of his day. He became one of the writers in *The Fundamentals*, a series of twelve volumes in defense of traditional evangelical faith that were published between 1910 and 1915. Volume 5, published early in the series, included a review and condensation by Campbell of a work by Lord George Lyttelton, "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul." Much of the article was in Campbell's words who outlined Lyttelton's logical arguments. Lyttelton attempted to prove that Paul's conversion experience was genuine, and thus Christianity was supernatural and a revelation from God.

After the end of the First World War, Campbell clearly identified himself with the rising fundamentalist movement. In early 1925, the *Baptist and Reflector*, the paper of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, ran a series of seven articles by Campbell that defended the trustworthiness of the Scriptural text and that examined modernism, claiming that it replaced the supernatural with the natural. In 1925, the *New York Times* published his letter defending the legislative act in Tennessee that outlawed teaching evolution in the public schools. The *Baptist and Reflector* printed it as well. He argued that as religious sectarianism is rightfully barred from the public schools so the same should be applied to sectarianism in science, which attacks religious faith. He believed science had its rightful sphere, but evolution was not true science.

In 1925, he also delivered the baccalaureate sermon at Carson-Newman, entitled, "Equipment for Service," which was then published as a pamphlet. A significant portion of the message was a Christian apologetic, discussing God as revealed in



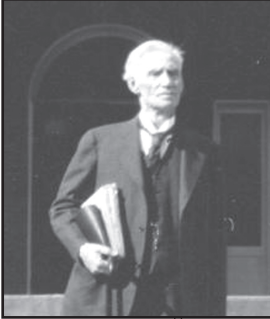
Courtesy of Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

## The Bible under Fire, Campbell's crowning work



nature, the Bible, Christ, and Christian experience.

His crowning work, however, was, *The Bible Under Fire*, published in 1928 by Harper and Brothers. The work received the imprimatur of Robert Dick Wilson, eminent evangelical scholar at Princeton Theological Seminary. Campbell incorporated much that he had written before, such as his series in 1925 in the *Baptist and Reflector*. He gave particular attention to higher criticism, modernism, and evolution, three topics he insisted were closely interrelated.



Courtesy of Carson-Newman College

### ***Campbell as professor at Carson-Newman***

In a tribute to Campbell, Charles W. Pope, pastor at the First Baptist Church of Jefferson City, declared Campbell “a true watchman on the walls of Zion, a defender of the faith with the courage of his convictions. His pulpit was a watchtower from which he warned his people of approaching danger.”

He underwent surgery in August 1928, at a time when there was little hope of his recovery, but he recovered sufficiently to begin the new school term in the fall. He had never missed a class.

On November 28, however, students assisted him out of the classroom to a bed. Two days later, his son, Ernest, a medical doctor in Manhattan, who was the head of Bellevue Hospital, brought him to his home. He did not long survive and died on Thursday, December 6.

The funeral service was held at the Central Baptist Church on Saturday, which was followed by a memorial service on Sunday. Besides his son, he was survived by his daughter, Ethel Campbell Baldwin, and two grandchildren, Marion Campbell and Raymond Baldwin. His wife, Maggie, predeceased him four years earlier. Upon his death, a number of tributes to him were written in Canada and the U.S.A.

### **Conclusion**

It is somewhat surprising that one with his record of ministry should be almost forgotten. He fails to appear in general accounts of Canadian Baptist history and receives almost no reference in the Baptist historical literature in the U.S.A. His churches in America have provided no historical accounts of his ministry. In Canada he does appear, however, in a short chapter in a history of the First Baptist Church of Vancouver, B. C. The author of the history of Carson-Newman College gave him limited justice, and the ministerial association at the school that carried his name became simply known in time as the Ministerial Association of Students.

One reason for this neglect may be due in part to his not holding any top executive denominational positions. Although

he wrote clearly and logically and his sermons were of a high literary and moral character; his scholarly work was not known for its originality but instead was a summation of the studies of others. Even his contribution to *The Fundamentals* was primarily an analysis of someone else's work.

On the other hand, Campbell's long career was most productive. In his preaching ministry he served churches small and large in three different countries and among four different Baptist groups. He was a pastor-scholar, a rarity in the Baptist ministry, while at the same time never bypassing opportunities for preaching or losing his evangelistic passion. He was a strong advocate of the foreign mission enterprise as seen in his support for missions in Canada, his world tour, and appeal to students for enlistment. Above all, he conveyed to the public as well as colleagues and students a love of the Bible, feeling the need not only to proclaim what he considered was its immutable message but also to defend its supernatural character and integrity.

## Notes

*Albert W. Wardin Jr. is professor emeritus of Belmont University, Nashville, Tennessee where he taught history from 1967 to 1993.*

The three best archival collections on Campbell's life are the Canadian Baptist Archives at McMaster Divinity College, the Baptist Archives at Carson-Newman College, and the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville, Tennessee, created as a result of the writing of this article.

An important source of Campbell's thought is his three books: *Heavenly Recognition and Other Sermons* (New York: American Church Press, 1895); *The Patmos Letters* (London: Morgan & Scott, and New York: Gospel Publishing House, 1908); and *The Bible Under Fire* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1928). Four other writings include his contribution to *The Fundamentals*, an analysis and condensation of an article by Lord Lyttelton, "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul"; "Our Martyred President," a memorial sermon on the assassination of William McKinley; "Open Membership in Baptist Churches," an address at the Boston North Baptist Association, 1908; and "Equipment for Service," a baccalaureate sermon preached at Carson-Newman College in 1925.

Publications that carried items on his earlier years:

1. *Watchman*, 14 January 1904, 28.
2. *Canadian Baptist*, 5 February 1914, 8; 16 September 1915, 9; 11 March 1920, 9; and 27 March 1924, 5.
3. *McMaster Monthly*, April, 1920, 331-32.

Publications that carried items on his ministry at Carson-Newman College and death:

1. *Baptist and Reflector*, 8 January to 26 February 1925; 5 June 1924, 8; 2

*He was a pastor-scholar, a rarity in the Baptist ministry, while at the same time never bypassing opportunities for preaching or losing his evangelistic passion.*

July 1925, 6–7; 13 December 1928, 2; and 20 December 1928, 9.

2. *The Orange and Blue*, (Carson-Newman), 1 October 1920, 1; 23 April 1923, 1, 4; 19 March 1927, 2; 12 January 1929, 4; and 9 February 1929, 1.

3. *Watchman-Examiner*, 20 December 1928, 1625.

4. *Canadian Baptist*, 20 December 1928, 4; and 3 January 1929, 6.

5. *McMaster Monthly*, February 1929, 215.

6. Clipping of an article by R. W. Bohanan, February 5, 1929, in the Baptist Archives at Carson-Newman.

7. Unidentified newspaper clipping, December 12, 1928, in the Canadian Baptist Archives.

Additional biographical sources are *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, 11:111; Leslie J. Cummings, *Our First Century* (Vancouver, B. C, Canada: Alpine Press, 1987), 27–28; and Isaac Newton Carr, *History of Carson-Newman College* (Jefferson City: Carson-Newman College, 1959), 294, 297. 