

## **Thomas McCulloch and William McGavin: A Neglected Transatlantic Literary/Religious Connection**

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In Maritime early nineteenth-century education, literature and church life there is one who towers above all other Presbyterians – Thomas McCulloch. A host of studies have been done on McCulloch explaining several aspects of his varied and energetic life.<sup>1</sup> It is certain that more studies will continue to emerge and be welcomed. This paper is an effort to explore one neglected aspect of Thomas McCulloch, namely his friendship with William McGavin and their relationship concerning matters of a transatlantic literary/religious nature. Because little is known of their friendship, this paper begins by establishing certain biographical matters. Attention will also be given to McGavin's letters to McCulloch which are invaluable for McCulloch studies. Brief compass will be made here to the letters and Roman Catholic polemics. Then the paper will proceed to examine parallel religious and moral literary themes in McGavin and McCulloch. Finally, the Covenanter ideal will be examined in each, and this examination will point to a web of Scottish writers.

### ***Thomas McCulloch and William McGavin: Two Scottish Lads***

The lifelong friendship between Thomas McCulloch and Rev. John Mitchell of Glasgow, and with the Mitchell family, has been duly noted since *Life of Thomas McCulloch* which was published by his son William McCulloch and edited by Thomas' granddaughters in 1920.<sup>2</sup> In many ways this is the strength and the weakness of this standard biography.<sup>3</sup> It offers much by way of contact between McCulloch and Scotland via the

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Mitchells but does not sufficiently explore other Scottish connections. For example, William McGavin is not included in the biography's index and the name occurs only once in the main text and only as "From Mr. McGavin of the 'Protestant.'" <sup>4</sup> Thus, it is easy to miss William McGavin. <sup>5</sup> A proper exploration of McCulloch and McGavin rewards a rich return to the student of McCulloch. It is good that the new *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* includes an excellent entry on McGavin, and with a link to Thomas McCulloch, something which the John Mitchell article omits. <sup>6</sup>

William McGavin was born in Auchinlock, Ayrshire in 1773, into a Seceder family (Antiburgher – the same denomination as the McCullochs). Auchinlock is famous for having been the burial place of the noted Covenanter, Alexander Pedan, remembered as the "prophet." McGavin's birthplace was significant as a Covenanter region and this surfaced in his writing. <sup>7</sup> As a boy he was apprenticed as a weaver, then bookseller, in Paisley where he attended the Oakshaw (Seceder) Street Church. The Oakshaw Street Church, Paisley, was the church home of the McCulloch family and we are told by a McGavin biographer that one of McGavin's closest friends during his Paisley youth was Thomas McCulloch – "a young man of great energy and superior attainments . . ." who was "among his more intimate friends" and, further, that they remained lifelong friends. <sup>8</sup> The other close friend of William McGavin's boyhood was Alexander Wilson, who achieved fame in America as an illustrator, ornithologist, friend and precursor of John Audubon. <sup>9</sup>

Thomas McCulloch was born in 1776, in Fereneze, now part of Barrhead, but at the time a distinct area between Neilston and Paisley. The Fereneze Hills run toward the border with Ayrshire and were the centre of a specialized textile trade. <sup>10</sup> It was an area which was going from a rural economic base to that of an industrialized region during McCulloch's childhood.

McGavin and McCulloch formed a close friendship from their common church connection in Paisley. McCulloch, unlike McGavin, proceeded to study at the University of Glasgow. While at the University he gave private lessons tutoring Hebrew. One of his students was Ralph Wardlaw. <sup>11</sup> Wardlaw's name will appear at various junctures of a study on McCulloch but here it is sufficient to note that Wardlaw was later McGavin's close friend. <sup>12</sup>

### ***The Six McGavin Letters and Roman Catholic Polemics***

Having introduced the matter of the close friendship between McCulloch and McGavin in Scotland, we break off exploring fuller biographical details and turn to the McGavin-McCulloch relationship after McCulloch's departure in 1803 to New Scotland (Nova Scotia). We begin with William McGavin's six extant letters to Thomas McCulloch between 1808 and 1819, which appear to have been ignored in McCulloch studies.<sup>13</sup>

In reading these letters there are at least four areas which deserve study: one, the relationship between McGavin and McCulloch on Roman Catholic polemics; two, the relationship between the two and literature; three, the relationship between the two and the exchange of news, new theological works and society enterprizes; and, four, the mention of McGavin's interest in McCulloch's "New College" (Pictou Academy).<sup>14</sup> Each of the four areas is worthy of a separate paper. However, I will limit my treatment to the first two, namely Roman Catholic polemics and literature. For both McGavin and McCulloch the religious and the literary were never far apart.

Thomas McCulloch's two largest theological works were on Roman Catholic polemics, to which McGavin made several references. *Popery Condemned by Scriptures and the Fathers* . . . was printed in Edinburgh in early 1808.<sup>15</sup> The first extant letter from McGavin to McCulloch is dated 7 March 1808; in it McGavin proceeded to tell McCulloch that he had obtained a new copy of *Popery Condemned* from Rev. John Mitchell (it may even be that McCulloch meant it as a complimentary copy for McGavin) and he wrote:

I have been very much amused by it, and have received no small instruction and information upon various points of the popish controversy. It is a subject upon which I would not have thought of reading, had the book not come from a friend . . . My wonder was excited by the great mass of information you had collected from the writings of the ancients, and could not help admiring the patience that carried you through so many ponderous volumes which you must have consulted . . .<sup>16</sup>

McCulloch obviously appreciated his good friend's words of encouragement and wrote two letters to McGavin in 1809, one on 25 July and the other on 20 December. One can infer from McGavin's reply of 15 March 1810 that McCulloch had informed his friend of the ongoing battle against Roman Catholicism in Nova Scotia which had necessitated

McCulloch to put pen to paper again in *Popery Again Condemned by Scriptures and the Fathers* . . . which was printed in Edinburgh in 1810.<sup>17</sup> McGavin expressed his comments and encouragement to McCulloch, “Do not be afraid of the Vicar General, I should like to see his book and your reply.”<sup>18</sup>

Again in 1811, McGavin wrote another letter to McCulloch with further commendation to McCulloch for his *Popery Condemned* writings.<sup>19</sup> McGavin was obviously one of McCulloch’s best readers. The next pertinent letter was written 11 March 1815. This piece of correspondence does not concern itself with issues Roman Catholic, but other literary matters to be considered shortly.<sup>20</sup> The McGavin letter of 1816 highlights McGavin’s service of furnishing McCulloch with British news and information. This letter reveals the intimate web of family and friends that brought these two men into mutual accord.<sup>21</sup>

The last letter which I have located to date from McGavin to McCulloch is dated 27 March 1819.<sup>22</sup> McGavin freely admitted his use of McCulloch’s two volumes of *Popery Condemned* in his own serial *The Protestant*: “You will see that I have made use of your name, and have sometimes availed myself of what you have written. I sometimes think that if I had not read your volumes, I would not have thought of writing on the subject, so I hope your work will be of more extensive benefit perhaps than you even thought of.”<sup>23</sup> It would appear that McGavin became Thomas McCulloch’s popularizer, taking McCulloch’s name many places. McGavin’s *The Protestant* was first published in Glasgow and there were separate printings in Dublin, Liverpool and Albany, New York. It received the attention of many, including the Bishop of St. David’s, Wales. Comments have been made that *The Protestant* was even more popular in the United States than in Britain.<sup>24</sup> In attempting to find direct references in *The Protestant* to McCulloch’s *Popery Condemned*, I found sixteen in volumes one and two. Two such references which are blatantly obvious: “As my friend Mr. McCulloch observes . . . [who is quoting from Aquinas on worshipping the cross] I make no apology for quoting so largely from so lively a writer as Mr. McCulloch, whose interesting work is not known in this country, except by a few individuals. This gentleman, who is a minister in Nova Scotia, has most ably exposed the errors of Popery . . .”<sup>25</sup>

It is not difficult to conclude from these six letters and from *The Protestant* that the man behind McGavin was McCulloch. Andrew Thomson, one of the leading evangelicals in the Church of Scotland, wrote a review on *The Protestant* and said: “This work . . . will be found to

contain a more complete view of the errors of Popery than any work that has been written since the happy Revolution in 1688.”<sup>26</sup> Should not a footnote have been given to Thomas McCulloch?

McGavin’s production of *The Protestant* appeared at an opportune time for McCulloch was busy with the struggles to develop Pictou Academy. The boyhood friendship from Paisley continued even after McCulloch’s departure for Nova Scotia, and the letters of McGavin highlight the exchange in the area of Roman Catholic polemics. I turn next to the area of literature, as readers are first introduced to it through the McGavin letters, then in a focused examination of select literary works and themes.

### ***McGavin and McCulloch: Parallel Literary Themes-Religious and Moral***

McGavin’s six extant letters to McCulloch present the matter of McGavin’s literary output in a simple factual manner. First McGavin decried the fact to McCulloch that he had been unable to publish more: “I have been so much taken up with the cares of business, during a period of singular commercial distress, that I have published nothing on any subject since I wrote you last.”<sup>27</sup> Since this is dated, 1811, it was before his writing on Roman Catholic polemics, and this points towards his other major writing enterprise—“tracts,” of which he made abundant references in four of the six letters.

Generally the word *tract* is perceived to be a “short treatise or discourse or pamphlet especially on [a] religious subject,”<sup>28</sup> such as the Oxford Tracts of the Tractarian Movement. McGavin’s tracts were most definitely on a religious subject but were often conveyed through the means of a story, so one has to have a certain elasticity in the use of his term “tract.” For example, in Letter No.4, dated 11 March 1815, McGavin listed some of the tracts that he was sending to McCulloch. They were: “The Royal Visitor,” “Profit and Loss,” “A Journey in the Highlands,” “True Riches,” and “Mrs. Murray and Her Children.”<sup>29</sup> About a year later McGavin wrote again to McCulloch and told him that he had sent the third part (tract) of “Mrs. Murray and Her Children” but said “whether there shall ever be a fourth part I cannot tell.”<sup>30</sup> These tracts were the only literary works mentioned by McGavin, excepting some verses he had written which were published without his knowledge.<sup>31</sup>

If one looks for a direct influence “from the pen of your correspon-

dent” (McGavin)<sup>32</sup> upon McCulloch’s literary endeavours of 1821 to 1823, in *The Mephibosheth Stepsure Letters* one will be hard pressed to find even a few literary similarities in terms of style with the McGavin tracts. This should not detract from the overall argument as it is encouraging to see new studies (such as one recently done by Gwendolyn Davies) commending other McCulloch literary material as showing the best reflection of McCulloch’s nineteenth-century literary preoccupations.<sup>33</sup> For too long readers have been limited to thinking of McCulloch as merely the father of Canadian humour with the use of satire.

There are clear parallels between McGavin’s “tracts” and McCulloch’s literary works but these lie most clearly in *Colonial Gleanings – William and Melville*, his novellas. Granted, “William” was extracted from *Stepsure* but when it was put with “Melville” it took a new literary form. *William and Melville* was aimed at parents in Scotland concerning their children going abroad, with all the potential dangers to their souls. It made for good Sabbath reading and fit with McGavin’s tracts.<sup>34</sup> In 1826, McCulloch was successful in securing a publisher for *William and Melville* in Edinburgh.<sup>35</sup>

McCulloch’s *William and Melville* and McGavin’s *Mrs. Murray and Her Children* are an excellent pair for comparison and, in particular, three parallel religious and moral themes appear, namely: spirituality versus materialism (our modern “lingo”); pious training; and, evangelism and conversion.<sup>36</sup>

The first parallel theme of spirituality versus materialism is prominent in both books. The story of McGavin’s *Mrs. Murray* centres around Mrs. Murray, the widow of two children: Mary, age eight, and James, age five. Her husband had died at age forty. While very prosperous, he had had no regard for his soul due to absorption in business. McCulloch’s *William* concerns a young man in Ayrshire growing up and longing after the pursuits of a fellow Scot who had acquired a vast fortune in America and then returned home. William wants to do the same: “In the opinion of the youth of Scotland, to go abroad and to get rich, are terms nearly synonymous.”<sup>37</sup> He leaves for Nova Scotia, seeking his fortune, and settles in Halifax. With the passage of time, he too, becomes engrossed in business and eventually business crowds out all true spirituality from his soul.<sup>38</sup> Both Mrs. Murray’s husband and William are like the parable of the rich farmer who built more barns but neglected his soul.<sup>39</sup> McCulloch made certain that his readers did not lose sight of this theme when he quoted from the Scottish Psalter of 1650, Psalm 49:11, where the rich

think that their houses will last forever but they fail to see that they cannot perpetuate themselves.<sup>40</sup>

Turning next to the parallel theme of pious training in McCulloch's *William and Melville* and McGavin's *Mrs. Murray* little searching is required. William, like Mrs. Murray's children, Mary and James, had been duly instructed-catechized in the scriptures and Christianity; William by two pious parents, Mary and James by their mother.<sup>41</sup> Family religion, in addition to church, received a predominant place in each book as the crucial sphere for pious training of the youth. Even in *Melville*, where Melville lacked such pious training in his youth, there is an example for the reading parents of what not to do. Yet Melville encountered the positive example of the piety of a house in the wilderness which leads naturally into the third parallel theme – evangelism and conversion.

Both books abound in this clearly evangelical theme, and are in keeping with the doctrinal perspective of the authors who were steeped in the theology of the free offer of the gospel. One reads in Mrs. Murray about a rebellious son who was “awakened” by the remembrance of the Scriptures.<sup>42</sup> William, at the end, is found reading a letter from his father and cries out “My father, my Bible, my Sav\_\_\_\_,” with the last word of course being “saviour.” William drifts off without uttering it. That scene mixes together the remembrance of pious training and the evangelical call to conversion and repentance of sin. It serves as an exhortation to the reader to believe in Christ.<sup>43</sup> With Melville one reads the story of a convert from, at best, nominalism to a living Christian faith.<sup>44</sup> The means that God uses in Melville's conversion is the great Presbyterian, James MacGregor, whom McCulloch writes into his story as a great evangelist, traversing the Maritime backwoods with the unadulterated gospel, without any New Light admixture. Yet old Nelson and his daughter Elizabeth also have their duty in witness and evangelism with Melville.<sup>45</sup> In much the same way Mrs. Murray, a woman, is held up as a model in the way she visited the poor, distributed tracts, catechisms, and, in essence, represented evangelical Christianity.<sup>46</sup> McGavin's writing is abundantly clear on the theme of being “in Christ” and the task of evangelism, as is McCulloch in *William and Melville*.

It is highly speculative and unnecessary to ask just how much McGavin's tracts aided McCulloch in pursuing such a literary course in *William and Melville*. The overall literary style, coupled with the religious and moral themes of spirituality versus materialism, pious training, and evangelism and conversion, are worthy notes of comparison. Such a study

also helps put McCulloch's work into the wider context of his day.

***The Covenanter Ideal and the Counter-Scott Circle***

Until recently little attention has been given to the Covenanter Ideal as expressed in Thomas McCulloch's literary works. It is not a central matter in *The Stepsure Letters*, but becomes much more central in *William and Melville* and in his unpublished literary works. Interestingly, the Covenanter Ideal was a major concern of William McGavin. Both men shared a common sympathy for the Scottish Covenanters and in particular for those who suffered during the days of persecution, the Killing Times.

In *William and Melville* one receives rather extensive information on the Covenanters, akin to an historical fiction novel. William's home south of Glasgow (likely Ayrshire) was the house from which William's great-grandfather had been taken, "to cement with his blood, in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, that noble structure of civil and religious privilege which is the glory of Scotland<sup>47</sup> [and] your great-grandfather . . . was dragged from this house and persecuted to the death, for the testimony of Jesus . . ."<sup>48</sup> Likewise, with the story of Melville, one learns much Covenanter history. The setting is on a western Scottish moor, the land of the "Mountain Men" or "Cameronians." McCulloch gave glowing praise to this body and wrote of "the beneficial influence of presbyterian government upon the religious and good order of mankind."<sup>49</sup> Onto the moor, where young Melville is, comes Andrew Welwood, a weaver and a Reformed Presbyterian. McCulloch makes a point of informing the reader that Welwood had examined the Bible "and respecting many points of the ecclesiastical history of Scotland, he possessed more accurate views than some, who, to the disgrace of the nation, have been recognized as its best historians . . ."<sup>50</sup> McCulloch was obviously making a "jab" at Sir Walter Scott. Following this interlude the story resumes to reveal how Melville's great-grandfather was indirectly responsible for William's great-grandfather's martyrdom. This scene includes a moving depiction of Melville's great-grandfather coming to the prison of Edinburgh seeking William's great-grandfather's forgiveness.<sup>51</sup>

Beyond McCulloch's published *William and Melville*, there is ample evidence showing that McCulloch had a personal attachment to the Covenanter Ideal. For example, he corresponded with Rev. Alexander Clarke, a leading Covenanter in the Maritimes residing in the Chignecto region. Clarke's letter to McCulloch of 14 June 1831 shows the cordial

regard which existed between the two men, one a Covenanter and the other Seceder.<sup>52</sup> Further correspondence ensued.<sup>53</sup> Somerville was also a leading Covenanter in the Maritimes; it is noteworthy that Thomas McCulloch's last speaking engagement was at the Covenanter Church at Cornwallis, Nova Scotia for Rev. William Somerville.<sup>54</sup> These points only show that McCulloch's Covenanter sympathies went beyond literature to include personal respect and admiration.

Looking past McCulloch's *William and Melville* for the Covenanter Ideal one encounters a myriad of manuscript material left by McCulloch, much of which is clearly Covenanter historical fiction. In *The Life of Thomas McCulloch* following a visit to Scotland, McCulloch

at the request of some friends there, began a series of tales designed to be an offset to Sir Walter Scott's aspersions of the Covenanters in "Old Mortality." Sir Walter entertained toward the Covenanters so little sympathy that he did not hesitate, if not to do them injustice, yet to withhold from them that meed of gratitude which his native land owners for their resistance to the will of a despot, and the well earned influence of Scotland on the world's history . . .<sup>55</sup>

It would be nice to know the names of the Scottish friends who suggested this subject for writing to McCulloch in the early 1820s. Because McGavin correspondence from the 1820s is not available it can only be speculated that he was one of the influencers. Nevertheless, with McGavin's vast array of publications on the Covenanters one cannot dismiss this speculation too quickly. McGavin edited the famous work by John Howie, *Scots Worthies*, and *Naphali* and published *Memories of John Brown of Priesthill and Rev. Hugh MacKail*.<sup>56</sup> In fact William Reid said of McGavin that there was no other contemporary of William McGavin, excepting Thomas McCrie, who possessed such a knowledge of the literature of the Reformation and Covenanting periods as William McGavin.<sup>57</sup> It is noteworthy that both McGavin and McCrie shared similar interests and a close friendship. McCrie wrote the biography of John Knox, whereas McGavin edited Knox's *History of the Reformation in Scotland* and dedicated this work to Thomas McCrie.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the revelation of the circle of friends keeps growing.

McCulloch would appear at first hand isolated from all that was being written on the Covenanters and against the Scott portrait, yet he was not really that far removed. The Mitchells may have taken one of the Covenanter manuscripts to a Scottish publisher, but in no way does this

account for the full extent of the Scottish friends urging McCulloch to write something to counter Sir Walter Scott. McGavin, McCrie and John Mitchell were also all signatories of the petition supporting Pictou Academy, another sign of the support and esteem they showed for their transplanted Scottish friend.<sup>59</sup>

McCulloch had a clear purpose in view for his literary work “Auld Eppie’s Tales,” which were rejected by Blackwoods for its course humour and for penetrating too closely into Scott’s field.<sup>60</sup> His response was:

I never intended to be an imitator of Sir Walter. I have neither his knowledge nor talents. But on the other hand I conceived that the kind of information and humour which I possess would have enabled me to vindicate where he has misrepresented, and render contemptible and ludicrous what he has laboured to dignify.<sup>61</sup>

McCulloch’s biographers summarize the purpose of this novel as: “The object was to place the principles and characters of the Scottish Covenanters in their true light.”<sup>62</sup> Thus McCulloch should be seen as producing a “counter fiction” in “Auld Eppie” and his other unpublished works, “Morton,” and “Days of the Covenanter” (as has also been said of John Galt’s *Ringan Gilhaize* [1823] and James Hogg’s *The Brownies of Bodsbeck* [1818]). There is immense value in placing McCulloch within the wider Scottish literary field. The contemporary critics viewed Galt and Hogg as “inferior copyists” in dealing with a subject which was “preoccupied ground.”<sup>63</sup> It seems that McCulloch was being relegated to these same ranks. John Raleigh has stated it well: “To have been alive and literate in the nineteenth century, was to have been affected in some way by the Waverley novels.”<sup>64</sup> Parallels have been drawn between McCulloch’s style and Galt’s but not by way of particularly addressing the theme of the Covenanter Ideal.

There is an entire host of Scottish literature and historical writings which need to be carefully studied and compared to McCulloch around the Covenanter Ideal. Many of these writers represent a particular “anti-Scott” viewpoint concerning *Old Mortality*, such as William McGavin, Thomas McCrie,<sup>65</sup> John Galt, and James Hogg. Should another be added, Robert Pollock? After all, it was Robert Grant in 1882 who made a comparison between McCulloch’s *William and Melville* and Pollock’s *Helen of the Glen*. Pollock’s work was issued as *Tales of the Covenanters*. It is highly sympathetic toward the Covenanters and includes three stories which were subsequently issued as one volume.<sup>66</sup>

The early-nineteenth century was a time of prolific writing on the Covenanter Ideal. Ina Ferris' seminal work, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History and the Waverley Novels* now needs to be brought into the light of other counter fiction writers to include McCulloch of Nova Scotia and also to compare it to his Scottish contemporaries McGavin, McCrie and Pollock, if not others.<sup>67</sup> Least one think this subject is only a matter of historical fiction of the Covenanters in early nineteenth-century literature, readers will note that the style and theme of the Covenanter Ideal are again being popularized in the North American evangelical community in Douglas Jones, *Scottish Seas*.<sup>68</sup> In all likelihood one would not hear any protest from a William McGavin or a Thomas McCulloch.

### **Conclusion**

This paper set out to show that "Two Scottish Lads" shared a common religious heritage and friendship while they grew up in Scotland. That friendship continued to be fostered by letters and other exchanges after Thomas McCulloch's departure for Nova Scotia. McCulloch clearly made an impact upon William McGavin's writings on Roman Catholic polemics, yet McCulloch too became a beneficiary in that process. An analysis of one selection of McCulloch's literary writings, *William and Melville* and one from McGavin, *Mrs. Murray and Her children*, shows the same themes and intentions of writing primarily a religious story with a moral purpose. Finally, both men were clearly part of a literary group of the early-eighteenth century which was anti-Scott and each in their respective ways produced literary or historical works in clear sympathy with the Scottish Covenanters. A proper study comparing the chronological development of Scott's *Waverley Novels* to McCulloch's "Covenanting Tales" awaits to be done.<sup>69</sup> Neither writer confines himself to the Killing Times, so a proper chronological study is in order – as is the securing of a place for a transplanted Scot, Thomas McCulloch, amongst the Scottish writers of the counter-Scott circle.

**Endnotes**

1. These studies include F.C. MacIntosh, "Some Nova Scotian Scientists," *Dalhousie Review* 10 (1930-31): 199-213; B. Anne Wood, "Thomas McCulloch's Use of Science in Promoting a Liberal Education," *Acadiensis* 17, 1 (Autumn 1987): 56-73; Thomas McCulloch, *The Mephibosheth Stepsure Letters*, ed. Gwendolyn Davies (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990); B. Anne Wood, "The Significance of Calvinism in The Educational Vision of Thomas McCulloch," *Vitae Scholasticae* 4 (1985): 15-30; J.C. Whytock, "Thomas McCulloch's Quest to Educate," forthcoming in *The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History Papers* (1999); William Klempa, "History of Presbyterian Theology in Canada to 1875," in *The Burning Bush and a Few Acres of Snow*, ed. William Klempa (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994), 193-218; Stanley E. McMullin, "In Search of the Liberal Mind: Thomas McCulloch and the Impulse to Action," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 23, Nos. 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 1988): 68-85; Vincent Sharman, "Thomas McCulloch's Stepsure: The Relentless Presbyterian," *Dalhousie Review* 52 (1972-1973): 618-625. It seems that D.C. Harvey was the originator of the idea that McCulloch towered as "King McCulloch" in his time in Nova Scotia, one whom Carlyle would have found a hero ("The Intellectual Awakening of Nova Scotia," *Dalhousie Review* 13 (1933-34): 14.
2. William McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch, D.D. Pictou*, eds. Isabella and Jean McCulloch (n.p.: n.p., 1920), i. The granddaughters wrote in the preface "With his college companion, and lifelong friend, the Rev. John Mitchell, D.D. of Glasgow, and also with his son, James Mitchell, Esq., he kept up a constant correspondence, and to the latter, the authors were indebted for the return of letters which have proved so valuable . . ."
3. McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch*, 220, 83, 82, 178, 162. In the index to this biography brief reference is made to both John and James Mitchell as well as a plate of John Mitchell, and throughout the work there are additional references to the Mitchells. The more recent shorter biographical work by Marjory Whitelaw, *Thomas McCulloch: His Life and Times* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1985) also duly noted the Mitchell/McCulloch connection (41).
4. McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch*, 27.

5. Likewise in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS), McCulloch Papers, there is only one letter from McGavin to McCulloch, so a cursory glance would lead one to conclude there is not much of a connection (see W. McGavin to T. McCulloch, 29 March 1819, from Glasgow., M 61, vol. 553 #149, PANS).
6. *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, eds. Nigel M. De S. Cameron, et al (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 1993), 514, 594.
7. John Howie, *The Scots Worthies*, ed. W. H. Carslaw (1870; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1995), 507-520. Pedan was disinterred and reburied at Cumnock at gallows. McGavin's boyhood home was also nearby the site of the murder of John Brown, a Covenanter martyr of some note.
8. William Reid, *The Merchant Evangelist, Being a Memoir of William McGavin* (Edinburgh, 1884), 17.
9. *The Posthumous Works of the Late William Accompanied with a Memoir; Including Autobiography Extracts from His Correspondence*, Vol. 1 (Glasgow, 1834), xx, xxii; and Reid, *The Merchant Evangelist*, 17, 19.
10. McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch*, 82; and Whitelaw, *Thomas McCulloch*, 4-5.
11. *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: xcvi; and W. McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch*, 8.
12. *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1893), XXXV: 84-85.
13. *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: lxxii-lxxiv. The six letters include: Letter No. 1, McGavin to McCulloch, 7 March 1808; Letter No. 2, McGavin to McCulloch, 15 March 1810; Letter No. 3, McGavin to McCulloch, 15 August 1811; Letter No. 4, McGavin to McCulloch, 11 March 1815; Letter No. 5, McGavin to McCulloch, 15 August 1816; Letter No. 6, McGavin to McCulloch, 29 March 1819.
14. There is a vast amount of material which needs to be digested concerning McGavin and the Pictou Academy. This literature will not be explored in this paper.
15. Thomas McCulloch, *Popery Condemned by Scriptures and the Fathers: Being a Refutation of the Principle Popish Doctrines and Assertions maintained in the Remarks on the Rev. Mr. Stanser's Examination of the Rev. Mr. Burke's Letter of Instruction to the Catholic Missionaries of*

*Nova Scotia, And in the Reply to the Rev. Mr. Cochran's Fifth and Last Letter to Mr. Burke, etc . . .* (Edinburgh: J. Pillans, 1808).

16. W. McGavin to T. McCulloch, 7 March 1808, in *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: lxxii, lxxiv.
17. Thomas McCulloch, *Popery Condemned by Scriptures and the Fathers* . . . (Edinburgh: A. Neil, 1810).
18. W. McGavin to T. McCulloch, 15 March 1810, in *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: xcvi.
19. W. McGavin to T. McCulloch, 15 August 1811, in *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: cx.
20. W. McGavin to T. McCulloch, 11 March 1815, in *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: ccxxxv-ccxxxvii.
21. W. McGavin to T. McCulloch, 15 August, 1816, *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: ccli-cclii. This is the only letter from McGavin to McCulloch which I have located at PANS.
22. W. McGavin to T. McCulloch, 29 March 1819, MGI Vol. 553 #149, PANS. This letter also appears in *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: cccxii-cccxiv.
23. W. McGavin to T. McCulloch, 29 March 1819, in *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: cccxiii.
24. *The Protestant* (i.e., *The Protestant: A Weekly Paper, on the Principle Points of Controversy Between the Church of Rome and the Reformed* , Vols. 1-IV [Glasgow: 1819-1822]) was issued as a bound set at the end of the serial run (Reid, *The Merchant Evangelist*, 129). A matter which needs to be more fully explored is why McCulloch received a D.D. from Union College, Schenectady, NY in 1820. Was it in part due to his *Popery* writings popularized by McGavin?
25. *The Protestant*, II: 10, 21.
26. Reid is quoting Thomson from "The Edinburgh Christian Instructor" of which Thomson was editor (*The Merchant Evangelist*, 135).
27. *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: cxii.
28. *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 1134.

29. *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: ccxxxvi. Absent from this list of tracts is one of McGavin's most popular "tracts" and books (it appeared in both forms), *Colin Cameron, the Shepherd Boy of Glennevis*. *Colin Cameron* is a work that parallels McCulloch's writings, whether published such as *Colonial Gleanings* or a manuscript such as "Auld Eppie's Tales." Both McGavin and McCulloch returned to the scenes of their boyhood, with ancient ruins, woods and fields (see Reid, *The Merchant Evangelist*, iv, 9-10).
30. *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: cclii.
31. *Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: lxxiv.
32. This is a phrase that McGavin uses in his letters (*Posthumous Works of the Late William McGavin*, I: ccxxxvi).
33. Douglas G. Lochhead, "A Bibliographical Note," *The Stepsure Letters*, Thomas McCulloch (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1960), 157; and Gwendolyn Davies, "Thomas McCulloch's Fictional Celebration of the Reverend James MacGregor," in *The Contribution of Presbyterianism to the Maritime Provinces of Canada*, eds., Charles H.H. Scobie and G.A. Rawlyk (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 74.
34. Gwendolyn Davies, "Editor's Introduction," *The Mephibosheth Stepsure Letters*, Thomas McCulloch (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990), xxxvii-xxxviii.
35. Davies, "Editor's Introduction," xxxviii-xxxix. Extracts from "Melville" also appeared later in 1826 back in Nova Scotia in the "Nova Scotian" (Thomas McCulloch, *Colonial Gleanings. William and Melville* [Edinburgh: Wm. Oliphant, 1826]). It would appear that this book has not been given as much attention as it should also receive to understand McCulloch's literary output. Marjorie Whitelaw's article, "Thomas McCulloch," gives a good summary of *William and Melville* and is perhaps one of the longest references to it (see "Thomas McCulloch," *Canadian Literature* 68-69 (Spring-Summer 1976): 138-147).
36. McGavin's "Mrs Murray" began in the letters to McCulloch as a series of tracts. Eventually McGavin completed the series into four tracts and they were subsequently bound together as one volume in 1827. It was No. 14 in "Griffin's Juvenile Library – a series of Moral, Instructive, and Amusing Works, adapted for the perusal of young people" (William McGavin, *The History of Mrs. Murray and Her Children* [Glasgow: Griffin, 1827]).

37. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 21.
38. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 24-39.
39. McGavin, *Mrs. Murray*, 4-5.
40. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 3. An interesting study of themes in McCulloch's *The Stepsure Letters* can be found in Robins Mathews, "'The Stepsure Letters': Puritanism and the Novel of the Land," *Studies in Canadian Literature* 7, No. 1 (1982): 127-138. Mathews notes the themes of humour, industry, puritan piety and, in particular, "the land." A similar study needs to be undertaken on *William and Melville* (see also Vincent Sharman, "Thomas McCulloch's Stepsure: The Relentless Presbyterian," *Dalhousie Review* [Winter 1972-73]: 618-625). Mathews notes that Stepsure's "fundamental goal is not the pursuit of riches," (135) a theme I am arguing for in this paper as a point of McCulloch- McGavin comparison (this is similar to Thomas McCulloch to Rev. McCulbertson, 10 July 1816, No. 22, Vol. 181, MG 100, PANS which is transcribed in part in Beverly Rasporich, "The New Eden Dream: The Source of Canadian Humour: McCulloch, Haliburton, and Leacock," *Studies in Canadian Literature* 7, No 2 [1982]: 228). Rasporich offers some interesting comments concerning themes in McCulloch's literary work *The Stepsure Letters*. Keefer also notes McCulloch's *The Stepsure Letters* and the theme of decadence: "the decadence which lured the sons of industrious farmers off the land into local taverns and shops, or into ballrooms and government offices in Halifax," (Janice Kulyk Keefer, *Under Eastern Eyes* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987], 35).
41. McGavin, *Mrs. Murray*, 4-5; and McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 13, 15, 18-20.
42. McGavin, *Mrs. Murray*, 146.
43. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 61.
44. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 146
45. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 98ff, 113ff.
46. McGavin, *Mrs. Murray*, 17, 22, 94.
47. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 16.

48. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 18. The clergyman of the parish were talking to young William. Further along in the text McCulloch described a blessed Sabbath scene in William's home in Scotland where "the domestic circle was entertained, not by a detail of the events of the week, but by a relation of the painful sufferings and triumphant exit of sires, who loved not their lives unto death" (30).
49. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 68.
50. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 70. McCulloch then proceeds to give a brief church history lesson and extol the virtues of the Covenanters (71).
51. McCulloch, *William and Melville*, 72-76.
52. Rev. Alexander Clarke to Rev. Thomas McCulloch, 14 June 1831, No. 61, vol. 550, MGI, PANS. I am indebted to Eldon Hay for bringing this letter to my attention (see Eldon Hay, *The Chignecto Covenanters* [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996]).
53. Rev. Thomas McCulloch to Mr. James Ross, 16 June 1835, Box 82 (f), F & I, Maritime Conference Archives, Sackville, NB; cited in Sheldon MacKenzie, *Gathered by the River* (Winnipeg: Hignell Book Printing, 1998), 81-82.
54. McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch*, 190.
55. McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch*, 141-142.
56. John Howie, *The Scots Worthies*, ed. W. H. Carslaw mentions that McGavin was of the opinion that Sir Walter Scott used John Howie as his character for "Old Mortality." Evidently, Scott claimed that this was not the case. The McGavin editions of *Scots Worthies* were printed in 1827, 1833-34, 1846 and 1858.
57. Reid, *The Merchant Evangelist*, 206. This can easily be argued as McGavin edited the famous covenanter work *Naphtali* (1829).
58. John Knox, *The History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland*, ed. William McGavin (Glasgow: Blackie Fullerton, 1831).
59. "Memorial on Behalf of the Literary and Philosophical Institution at Pictou, Nova Scotia" (Scotland, 1825) in which the Scottish list of subscribers is given.

60. McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch*, 142. For a good summary of the attempts to have "Auld Eppie's Tales" published see G. Davies, "Editor's Introduction," xlii-xlvi and endnotes; and William Blackwood to James Mitchell, 18 May 1829, ALS, acc. 5643/38, Blackwoods Letter-Books, *National Library of Scotland*. The manuscript is at PANS but, as D.D. Harvey wrote, a proper examination is difficult due to it never having been completed as a series of novels and it has become "somewhat disarranged." The manuscript is in McCulloch's own hand and a partial typescript (file 1-50, 4 and file 51-100, vol. 2435, MGI, PANS).
61. Thomas McCulloch to James Mitchell, 18 May 1829, ALS, No. 39, Vol. 553, MGI, MP, PANS; cited in McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch*, 142.
62. McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch*, 142.
63. Ina Ferris, *Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 163; and Emma Letley, *From Galt to Douglas Brown: Nineteenth Century Fiction and Scots Language* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988).
64. Ferris, *Achievement of Literary Authority*, 1.
65. Thomas McCrie, *A Vindication of the Scottish Covenanters: Consisting of a Review of the first series of the "Tales of my Landlord," extracted from the "Christian Instructor" for 1817* (Glasgow, 1824). I am thankful to Douglas Murray, University of Glasgow, for discussions with me on McCrie and Scott (see also Douglas M. Murray, "Martyrs or Madmen? The Covenanters, Sir Walter Scott and Dr. Thomas McCrie," *The Innes Review* XLIII, No. 2 [Autumn 1992]: 166-175). Murray draws attention to Kay V. Mathias, "A Study of Walter Scott's *Old Mortality*," M.A. thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1968, among some studies on this subject.
66. Pollock wrote three "Sabbath School Tales" in 1824-25: "Helen of the Glen," "Ralph Gemmel," and "The Persecuted Family." Various editions of these three tales have appeared (see Robert Pollock, *Tales of the Covenanters* [New Edition] [Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincot, n.d.]). For biographical information see Robert Pollock, *The Course of Time: A Poem*, rev. ed. (Boston: Mussey, 1843), xv-xxii; "Memoir of the Author"; and *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. XLVI: 69-70; Thomas McCulloch, *The Prosperity of the church in Troublous Times: Being a Sermon Preached at Pictou, Friday, 25 February 1814*; Robert Grant, "Introduction" (New Glasgow: MacKenzie Printers, 1882), 4. His

“William and Melville” is superior to Pollock’s “Ellen of the Glen” [sic].

67. Ferris, *Achievement of Literary Authority*, 137-160 and 161-194. Now that a definitive edition of *Old Mortality* has been issued, hopefully this will inspire many to take up the challenge and explore the anti-Scott circle of writers (Walter Scott, *The Tale of Old Mortality*, ed. Douglas Mack, in “The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels” (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993).
68. Douglas Jones, *Scottish Seas* (Moscow: Canon Press, 1996).
69. A good place to begin would be Henry Grey, *A Key to the Waverley Novels in Chronological Sequence with Index of the Principle Characters* (New Edition, London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1910); and Robert S. Rait, “Walter Scott and Thomas McCrie,” in *Sir Walter Scott Today*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson (London: Constable, 1932), 3-37.

