

**REV. CALVIN FAIRBANK DURING
SLAVERY TIMES: HOW HE
"FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT" TO
PREPARE "THE WAY." [CHICAGO-
1890]**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649692743

Rev. Calvin Fairbank During Slavery Times: How He "Fought the Good Fight" to Prepare "The Way." [Chicago-1890] by Calvin Fairbank

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Cover @ 2017

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CALVIN FAIRBANK

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REV. CALVIN FAIRBANK

DURING SLAVERY TIMES.

HOW HE "FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT" TO PREPARE
"THE WAY."

EDITED FROM HIS MANUSCRIPT.

CHICAGO:
R. R. McCABE & Co., PUBLISHERS,
1890.

Checked
May 1913

PREFACE.

IN presenting to the public so small a volume as a representation of so large and extraordinary an experience, I feel bound by sentiments of propriety to answer beforehand the query of every one, perhaps, who has for several years looked for its publication in a more extensive edition, and at an earlier day.

• Upon my liberation in April, 1864, my health did not allow me to write. Very soon thereafter the country was flooded with books on the war. Neither then, nor since then have I been able myself to defray the expense of its publication. I had written twelve hundred pages, sufficient to make five hundred pages of readable matter; but every one considered it too long. I had since that time prepared what I thought could be safely published and put in market. But men of experience, in order to avoid the risk of financial failure, advised condensation in this edition and wait results.

Please accept this as my apology, and believe me

Yours in faith,

CALVIN FAIRBANK.

ANGELICA, NEW YORK.

August, 1890.

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CHAPTER I.

Parentage—Birth—Education.

MY parents were of English extraction. My father's grandfather came to New England about 1730, and settled in Massachusetts, near what is now known as Fall River, in the southern part of the state. My father was born at Swansea, Massachusetts, in 1788, during that terrible war maintained by King Philip against the white settlements in that vicinity. He removed to Windsor county, Vermont, while quite young.

My mother, Betsey Abbott, was the daughter of Jacob Abbott, a name now famous in the history of church and state in this country, whose father settled

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on Martha's Vineyard in the year 1750, where Jacob was born. His father, with others of the family, desiring more room, removed to Massachusetts; and thus the family was scattered throughout New England.

When my grandmother was only twelve years of age, being left alone one day, she was captured by the Indians, and taken across the Connecticut river in a canoe, then put on horseback, and carried twenty miles into the forest to their settlement. She was kindly treated, though carefully guarded; but she won the confidence of the guard, who, after partaking—with her, as he thought—too freely of "fire water," fell asleep. It was her chance, and while all were locked in profound slumber, she slipped her saddle from under the head of the chief, hastily saddled and mounted the old white horse, who knew his young mistress, and was soon beyond the reach of her enemies, whom she heard toward day-break, whooping on her trail. "Whitey" knew his way home, and reaching the Connecticut plunged fearlessly in, and swimming with vigor, soon reached the opposite bank, leaving between him and his savage, disappointed pursuers the broad swift current of the stream. He bore his precious burden safely up the bank, and as she appeared through the brush, a shout of joy rang out on the morning air, from anxious parents, and friends, who had spent the



long night in searching, and watching, and praying for her.

My mother was born at Stafford, Tolland county, Connecticut, February 13th, 1787, but soon after removed to Windsor county, Vermont, where she grew to womanhood, surrounded, as was also my father, by circumstances favorable to the cultivation of sanctified pluck. On the first of January, 1810, at Judge Key's residence, Stockbridge, Windsor county, Vermont, my father and mother were married, and ever after in the most holy manner, kept their plighted faith.

Upon the outbreak of the war in 1812, my father volunteered, leaving my mother, with my oldest brother and sister, in care of the two families. He remained in the service until a short time before the close of the war. Then, in company with other members of both families, he removed to a section of country considered almost beyond the bounds of the civilized world—now Pike, Wyoming county, New York. There in the woods, on the third day of November, 1816, I first saw the light of day.

The ancestry of both father and mother, their surroundings in the new world, their experiences, all tended to the development of energy, and courage both moral and physical, and a sense of justice without regard to race, class, or sex.

My earliest recollections carry me back to the forests filled with wolves howling about our cabin, the trees so near that, falling toward it, they often crashed upon its roof. Of society, outside of our own family, I call up Christian communion with the neighbors. My mother, being a pioneer, stirred up all susceptible to gospel truth, to purity, charity, and spirituality. My first impressions were from the Christian efforts from house to house, in the prayer-meeting, the class-meeting, and preaching by the circuit preachers. These men were accustomed to traveling over two hundred miles in the round of their circuits, preaching nearly every day, and on Sundays three times, filling their several appointments once in four weeks.

As the time for the visitation of the circuit preachers drew near, the people in the neighborhood began to so plan their business, that all able to walk through the forests—through mud, or snow, or both—from one-half to two miles, might gather in the log houses—dwelling-houses and school-houses—to listen to the preached Word, to pray and sing praises to God, to encourage one another, and bring old and young into the fold of Christ.

The whole community then, so far as I knew, and for many years after, were entirely devoted to the work of the Methodist society there, and the promotion

of Methodism throughout that section of country; and to this day the Methodist idea is the prevailing idea in the neighborhood, and Methodism holds the balance of power over an area of a hundred miles. That was Old Genesee Conference, as it is now, and will always be. And that wonderful growth and steadfastness of Christianity was the result, almost entirely, of the fidelity, indomitable courage and executive ability of a noble Christian woman. She was the instrument and power, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, in bringing, first, my father, then many other good men, with their families, into the fold of Christ, following her as she followed Him. And such a follower! I never knew that mother to lay down the armor—to sleep on her watch—to fail, in all kindness, to exhort, reprove, to warn, to commend the religion of Jesus Christ to all—up to the day of her death, December 18th, 1882, at the age of ninety-six. So I inherited the will and the power to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. I very early felt the need of the new birth in Christ, and week after week, year after year, mourned over my alienation from God, and from time to time promised myself resignation to His will. Often, when alone in the forest, I imagined myself with an audience before me, pointing them to the Lamb of God.