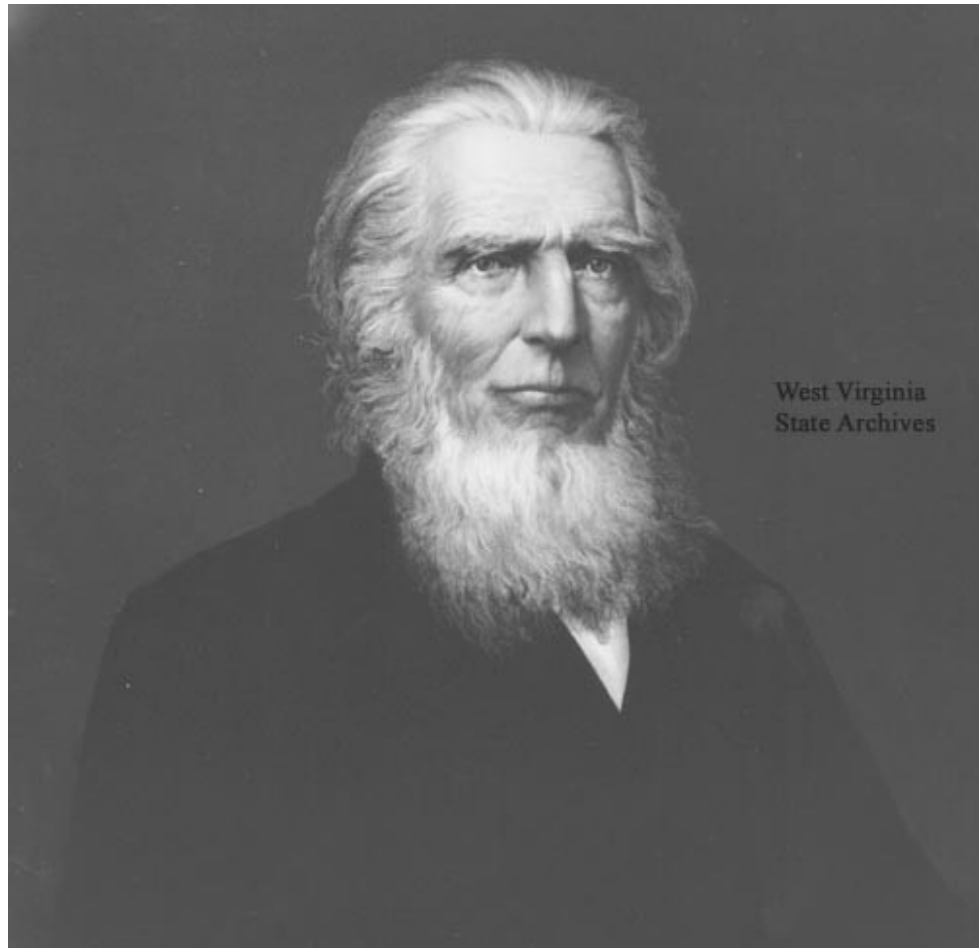


THE CAMPBELL CONTROVERSY



ALEXANDER CAMPBELL



BACKGROUND

- **Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) part of anti-mission controversy because he opposed mission agencies as not warranted by the NT—but there was a larger, more important controversy re: his teachings and his relationship to the Baptists**
- **Campbell was born in Ireland and educated by his father, Thomas, a Scotch-Irish Seceder Presbyterian minister—his father introduced Alexander to works of philosopher John Locke**

BACKGROUND (cont.)

- **1807—Thomas Campbell settled in western PA—Alexander and his family were supposed to sail for America in 1808 but a shipwreck prevented it so Alexander studied for 10 months at University of Glasgow, where he was influenced by James & Robert Haldane, who promoted a return to primitive Christianity of NT**
- **1809—Thomas Campbell left Presbyterians because of disputes over his open communion practices and his attacks on Calvinism**

BACKGROUND (cont.)

- **Thomas soon formed the Christian Association of Washington (PA) to advance ecumenical union based on the NT, not on creeds (“Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”)**

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL IN AMERICA

- Alexander and his family arrived in PA soon after his father set up the Christian Assoc.
- 1811—the 2 Campbells organized the Brush Run Church with Thomas as elder and Alexander ordained to preach
- 1812—soon after the birth of a child, Alexander began to doubt the validity of infant baptism—soon he, his father, and other members of the family were immersed by Matthias Luce, a Baptist pastor—other members of Brush Run Church followed this example

CAMPBELL IN AMERICA (cont.)

- **1813—Brush Run Church was accepted into the Redstone Baptist Assoc. in western PA—some in the assoc. opposed this because of A. Campbell's unwillingness to subscribe to the Phila. Confession and his hostility to some of the Baptist ministers**
- **over the next several years, A. Campbell itinerated in OH, IN, KY, TN, and VA—by 1816 it became apparent that his views were far from the Baptist mainstream**

CAMPBELL'S TEACHINGS

- radical disjunction of OT and NT (OT almost became “Scripture emeritus”)
- opposition to musical instruments in worship and mission societies as unbiblical
- Arminianism—emphasis on free will, *tabula rasa* (some Enlightenment influences here)
- baptism as “the first formal and comprehensive act of obedience of faith”—all that was needed for baptism was a confession of faith in Christ

CAMPBELL'S TEACHINGS (cont.)

- **faith defined as intellectual knowledge or mental assent—Campbell denied that a person needed to be regenerated prior to the first act of faith—Holy Spirit operated upon the mind & conscience of the unbeliever only through the written Word**
- **many Baptists believed that Campbell was moving in the direction of baptismal regeneration—in a debate in KY in 1823, he made the following statement:**

CAMPBELL'S TEACHINGS (cont.)

- **“The water of baptism, then, formally washes away our sins. The blood of Christ really washes away our sins. Paul’s sins were really pardoned when he believed. Yet he had no solemn pledge of the fact, no formal acquittal, no formal purgation of his sins until he washed them away in the water of baptism.”—thus for Campbell, baptism by immersion completed the process of salvation**
- **weekly Lord’s Supper—most Baptists at this time celebrated it monthly or quarterly**

CAMPBELL vs. BAPTISTS

- **1823—Campbell began publishing the *Christian Baptist* as a periodical to voice his views—he used the journal to espouse “Restorationism,” or a complete return to NT Christianity—he replaced this periodical in 1830 with the *Millennial Harbinger***
- **Baptists divided over soundness of Campbell’s doctrines—those who supported him became known as “Reformed Baptists”**

CAMPBELL vs. BAPTISTS (cont.)

- churches supporting Campbell either withdrew from Baptist associations or were excluded— in 1825 Redstone Baptist Assoc. expelled the Brush Run Church
- by 1830 fellowship between Baptists and Campbellites became impossible—there were theological and *ad hominem* attacks on Campbell (some Baptist papers pictured him as a Deist or Unitarian and/or attacked his character)

NEW MOVEMENT

- Campbell sought to avoid denominationalism but in 1832 his Disciples united with Barton Stone's Christians to form the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—later came the Churches of Christ (1906) as a reaction to liberalism among the Disciples, and the Christian Church/Churches of Christ (1927), as a middle ground between Disciples and Churches of Christ
- overall, Baptists lost some people (e.g., over 9500 in KY between 1829-31)