



Alexander Campbell

1788-1866

Significant Events and Background

- Influenced by religious movements in Scotland (James and Robert Haldane) that emphasized Christianity as found in the New Testament
- 21 when he immigrated to America in 1809, joined his father Thomas
- 1811 – married Margaret Brown (landowning family in Bethany, Virginia, now W.Va.). Together they had 8 children.
- Ordained by the Brush Run Church in 1812

Brush Run Church

- Thomas Campbell minister
- First met together on June 16, 1811
 - The Christian Association of Washington reconstituted itself as the church on May 4, 1811
 - The building and congregation were soon known as the Brush Run Church
 - The Ordination Certificate of Alexander Campbell (1812), referred to the ordaining body as "The First Christian Church of the Christian Association of Washington."
 - Congregationally governed (not part of any presbytery)
 - At the first meeting, 3 persons requested immersion
 - They had not been sprinkled as infants
 - Thomas immersed them

Significant Events and Background

- Alexander's first daughter born in 1812
(began to study baptism, focusing first on infant baptism)
- **1812 – Thomas and Alexander, their wives, and three others baptized by Matthias Luce (Baptist) based on simple confession of faith in Jesus**
 - Baptism severed ties with Presbyterian church

Campbell's Baptism

- In 1812 Campbell came to reject the popular understanding of saving faith. It is no coincidence that Campbell was immersed that same year. Since he had already rejected the “conversion narrative” approach to church membership and baptism, Campbell asked Matthias Luce, a local Regular Baptist minister, to immerse him, and Luce accommodated him on June 12, 1812. Campbell, however, stipulated with Elder Luce that the ceremony should be performed precisely according to the pattern given in the New Testament, and that, as there was no account of any of the first converts being called upon to give what is called a “religious experience,” this modern custom should be omitted, and that the candidates should be admitted on the simple confession that “Jesus is the Son of God”...There were not, therefore, on this occasion, any of the usual forms of receiving persons into the Church upon a detailed account of religious feelings and impressions...All were, therefore, admitted to immersion upon making the simple confession of Christ required of converts in the apostolic times.
- Campbell's immersion reflected a significant theological shift. It was not simply that Campbell was now a baptist rather than a paedobaptist, but also that he had rejected the conversion narrative theology of his early training. He no longer sought a subjective religious experience to confirm his regeneration and assure him of the remission of his sins. On the contrary, he now regarded immersion as that objective moment which assured him of God's forgiveness. Campbell's theological shift from paedobaptist to Baptist was more than a conversation about whether to baptize infants, it was also a statement about the nature of faith and the role of Christian experience.

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- 1813 -- **Aligned with the Redstone Baptist Association**

Campbells and Redstone Baptist Association

- When the Campbells (and the Brush Run Church) began practicing baptism by immersion in 1812, the church was invited to join the Redstone Baptist Association in 1815.
- Campbells and Brush Run agreed provided they would be "allowed to preach and teach whatever they learned from the scriptures" without being limited by the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*

Davis, M. M. (1915). [*How the Disciples Began and Grew, A Short History of the Christian Church*](#), Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company. P.88

- Friction based on the views expressed in the *Christian Baptist*
 - Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" (1816) and argument that the Old Testament should not be used as a basis for Christian life (Debate in 1820)
 - Campbell's emphasis on baptism *for the remission of sins*
- Redstone withdrew from Brush Run in 1824

The Philadelphia Confession of Faith

Chapter 29

Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

1. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, to be continued in his church to the end of the world. (Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:26)
2. These holy appointments are to be administered by those **only who are qualified and thereunto called, according to the commission of Christ.** (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 4:1)

Chapter 30

Of Baptism

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a **sign** of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27; Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:4)
2. Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only **proper subjects** of this ordinance. (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36, 37, 2:41, 8:12, 18:8)
3. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is **water**, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 8:38)
4. **Immersion**, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance. (Matt. 3:16; John 3:23)

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- 1823 – **Withdrew (friendly) from Brush Run and established a church in Wellsburg, Ohio; joined the Mahoning Baptist Association**

Christian Baptism: With its Antecedents and Consequents (1851)

- <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015020738467&view=1up&seq=16>
- Focused on five points regarding baptism
 - The *antecedents*
 - The *action*, called baptism (Immersion/Sprinkling)
 - The *subject* of that action (Believers/Infants)
 - The *design of that action (Purpose)*
 - The *consequents* of that action