



# Alexander Campbell

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1788-1866

# 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

# Christian Baptism: With its Antecedents and Consequents (1851) Introduction

“The important question of Christian Baptism is yet, with many, an undecided question. With man, too, it has been decided wrong, because decided on human authority, or on partial evidence, **without personal and proper examination.**”

“Five points are necessarily involved in this discussion, essential to a **rational and scriptural decision of the question.**”

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“Neither Christian faith nor Christian character can be inherited, as the goods and chattels of this world. There is no royal or ancestral path to faith, piety, or humanity. **Whatever truly elevates, adorns, or dignifies a human being, must be, more or less, the fruit of his own labor.**”

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“The continual agitation of this subject is important and benevolent, as long as unscriptural views of it are not only entertained, but made the bitter root of discord amongst good men, and of schism in the Christian profession. **Truth ever gains, and error uniformly loses, by discussion.**”

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“The Christian profession is not now what it once was. It has become secular and sectarian. The members of the church of Christ were formerly called ‘saints’, ‘elect of God’, a chosen generation’, ‘a royal priesthood’, ‘a peculiar people’. Now they are called ‘Churchmen’, ‘Dissenters’, ‘Romanists’, Protestants’, Episcopalians’, ‘Presbyterians’, ‘Independents’, Baptists’, ‘Methodists’, etc.”

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“All creeds are mere theories of Christian doctrine, discipline, and government, exhibited as a basis of church union.” (He goes on to point out how miserably they have failed)

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(After naming the various denominations he opines) “Amongst them all, we thank the grace of God that there are many who believe in, and love the Saviour, and that, though we may not have Christian churches, we have many Christians.”



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“...we have proposed an *Evangelical Reformation* – or, rather, a return to the faith and manners anciently delivered to the saints – a RESTORATION of *original Christianity both in theory and practice*. The three capital points of which are:

- I. The Christian Scriptures, the only rule and measure of Christian faith and learning.
- II. The Christian confession, the foundation of Christian union and communion.
- III. The Christian ordinances – baptism, the Lord’s day, and the Lord’s Supper, -- as taught and observed by the Apostles.”

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“Concerning the first, it would seem enough to say, that as the Christian writings are the production of the Holy Spirit speaking to us through the minister of Christ, they are just what they ought to be...Hence the Christian Scriptures, when fairly translated, are more intelligible, comprehensive, and consequently better adapted to the whole family of man, than any formula of Christian doctrine ever delivered to man. If we cannot unite, and harmonize all discords, upon God’s own book, in vain we shall attempt it on the books of men.”

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Regarding the Christian confession..."this confession (made by Peter, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God') must be made by every applicant for Christian baptism ... in order to be admitted into the Christian kingdom or church. No minister, or church of Jesus Christ, has any divine right or authority to ask for more or accept of less than this..."

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## Introduction

“Concerning the other Christian **ordinances**, we observe that, being monumental of the Christian facts – Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection – and containing in them the grace of God; being also social in their nature, they are weekly institutions, and to be diligently observed by all the faithful in Christ Jesus in their public weekly assemblies...As for prayer and praise, they are, indeed, Christian **institutions**; but not exclusively so....Though we have no private, no family altar, priest, or sacrifice, we have our personal and our Christian family prayer and praise...”

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[In order to find unity] “...instead of the modern ecclesiastic and sectarian terminology, or technical style, we adopt BIBLE NAMES FOR BIBLE THINGS. For example: instead of ‘sacraments’ we prefer ‘ordinances’, for the ‘Eucharist’, the “Lord’s Supper’...”

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“The second grand proposition essential to an evangelical reformation – to Christian union and cooperation in the kingdom of Christ, is, -- that UNITY OF FAITH, and not *unity of opinion*, must be publicly and privately taught and advocated as prerequisite to the communion of the children of God.”

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## Introduction

“The Bible...is properly divided into three grand elements. These are properly called *facts, precepts, and promises....We call any thing said or done, a fact; any thing commanded to be done, a precept; and any thing promised to be done, a promise....Facts are only to be believed, precepts to be obeyed, and promises to be enjoyed and hoped for, as well as believed. We must be, because we can be, of one faith, of one obedience, and of one hope; but we need not be, because we cannot be, of one opinion...*”