

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE

General Robert E. Lee once stated, "If I were asked to select a representative of the human race to the inhabitants of other spheres in our universe, of all the men I have known, I should select Alexander Campbell, then I know they would have a high impression of what our humanity is like." Quotes such as these give us an accurate portrayal of Alexander Campbell, friend, brother, scholar, preacher, and debater.

Alexander Has always interested in spiritual matters. His father Thomas came up with the idea that men's rules and opinions had divided Christendom and that only by returning to the Bible and restoring that which is spoken of in the New Testament could all people unite. Alexander shared his father's dreams, preaching and defending the truth of the New Testament.

Alexander Campbell was an excellent business man along with his preaching duties. He owned a farm in Bethany, West Virginia and managed it in such a manner that money was never a problem. But the exciting side of Campbell was his love for the truth and his ability to defend it. During the years of preaching in almost every state, Alexander edited the *Christian Baptist* from 1823-1830 and then the *Millennial Harbinger* from 1830-1870 with help from Robert Richardson. At times Campbell's pen was hard and cutting, not only defending the doctrines he preached but showing error and its consequences. The tone of the *Christian Baptist* Has often too harsh for many denominationalists to bear, while the *Millennial Harbinger* was milder in later years.

Another part of Alexander's career was his debates. At first Alexander did not feel that debates were productive but he later changed his mind. He debated John Walker and William McCalla on Baptist reform and baptism, respectively. One of the more famous debates was with Scottish infidel Robert Owen, when Alexander Campbell gave a 12-hour speech on Christian evidences. Campbell also debated Bishop John Purcell on Roman Catholicism and N. L. Rice on baptism, creeds, and the Holy Spirit.

Campbell's most famous sermon was probably the one delivered at the Red Stone Association on August 30, 1816. This sermon completely broke the last remaining ties with the Baptist church. Campbell preached the sermon on "The Law" showing that the Law of Moses was fulfilled in Christ and that salvation can only be found in the pages of the New Testament. With some 1,000 in attendance including 22 preachers, his lesson meet with opposition but was scripturally sound.

Next week, Walter Scott, A Gifted Orator.

---Greg