

# *Alexander Campbell's Passion for Print: Protestant Sectarians and the Press in the Trans-Allegheny West*

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'Campbellism is the *great* curse of the West,' a writer for the American Home Missionary Society warned in 1842, ranking the movement alongside the despised Mormons and Catholics in his Calvinist universe. '[It is] more destructive and more injurious to the cause of religion than avowed infidelity itself.'<sup>1</sup> The man who lent his name to this most destructive force was Alexander Campbell of Bethany, Virginia. Born in Northern Ireland, Campbell emigrated to western Pennsylvania in 1809 and within two decades, became a leading

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1. American Home Missionary Society, *Our Country, Its Capabilities, Its Perils, and Its Hope: Being a Plea for the Early Establishment of Gospel Institutions in Destitute Parts of the United States* (New York, 1842), 46.

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voice among the Protestants who later became known as the Disciples of Christ, derided by their critics as 'Campbellism.'<sup>2</sup>

The ground on which Campbell fought Congregationalists and Presbyterians in the AHMS (and Catholics, socialists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists) was the printed page. At a time in which most preachers made their reputations in the pulpit, Campbell made his name as a sharp-tongued sectarian in the pages of his publications, most of which he printed himself in a small shop behind his sprawling white frame house overflowing with children, students, and books in a remote valley fifty miles west of Pittsburgh. The location was important. Campbell postured as one who had foregone the luxuries of the eastern cities in favor of the simpler (and hence more genuine, he thought) society of the trans-Allegheny west. From Bethany, he produced the *Christian Baptist*, a monthly beginning in 1823, several book-length accounts of his public debates over Christian doctrine and socialism, and his own translation of the New Testament. From the earliest days of his career, Campbell wed his own fortunes to the printing press, and his reputation as an editor-bishop became legendary even in his own lifetime.

A commonplace of nineteenth-century American history is that print organized people into political parties, into denominations, and into benevolent societies. But how exactly did this happen? The popular press has been credited with the ability to create civil society by linking people of like mind across the young nation in communities, imagined or otherwise.<sup>3</sup> Yet we still know relatively little about how print mobilized people—that is, the relation between the production and consumption of print—or even whether it did so. John L. Brooke has provocatively asked whether a direct correlation between the printed page and voter turnout even exists, for example.<sup>4</sup>

2. In 1860, the Disciples of Christ, concentrated in the Ohio River valley and across the Upper South, counted 200,000 members and was the fifth largest Protestant denomination in the country.

3. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

4. Brooke, 'To Be "Read By the Whole People": Press, Party, and Public Sphere in the United States, 1789-1840,' *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 110 (2000): 41-118.

In order to begin to trace the meaning of sectarian print in the early United States, we must know how it was produced, by whom, and in what circumstances. Religious newspapers, tracts, and pamphlets were ubiquitous in nineteenth-century Protestant churches and homes, and they crowd the footnotes of every study of the period. By the time Alexander Campbell fired his opening shot in the pages of his *Christian Baptist* in 1823, the number of religious journals was exploding in the United States, and publications such as Baptist association minutes rivaled government documents as the earliest imprints from frontier presses.<sup>5</sup> Recent studies by David Paul Nord and Candy Gunther Brown have begun to demonstrate the rich results when this avalanche of religious print is studied in its own right. Yet this work has focused on the unifying properties of Protestant print culture, particularly as it was ingeniously and forcefully used by leaders of national benevolent societies such as the American Tract Society, the American Sunday School Union, and the American Bible Society. The tracts, pamphlets, and books of these societies were intended to foster a broad unity among Protestants and their language deliberately tried to gloss over doctrinal disagreements.

Alexander Campbell used print for another purpose entirely. He denounced the unity championed by these agencies. One of the characteristic manners of nineteenth-century American Protestantism was its rude sectarian bent.<sup>6</sup> He and leaders of other new American churches, including William Miller and Joseph Smith,

5. Where only 14 existed before 1789, 172 journals were founded in the next thirty years, and 360 more in the decade before 1830. By 1829, two New York City religious journals claimed the highest circulation in the world, with many others counting circulation rates far in excess of the most popular secular political journals of the day. Gaylord P. Albaugh, *American Religious Periodicals and Newspapers Established from 1730 through 1830* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1994), xi–xxi. Albaugh found that 75 percent of these journals survived for fewer than four years, but the number in print at any one time was growing at an enormous rate. On Baptist minutes on the early frontier, see Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Early Printing in Tennessee: With a Bibliography of the Issues of the Tennessee Press, 1793–1830* (Chicago: Chicago Club of Printing House Craftsman, 1933).

6. Richard Carwardine, in particular, has argued for the importance of sectarian debate in the context of a historical literature that tends to treat 'evangelicalism' as a monolith. Kurt O. Berends has stressed the importance of sectarianism in the South, a region that has generally been characterized in the literature by a bland and monolithic 'southern

used print to publicize their movements, bolster their own positions, and to rally the souls of their own soldiers over against their opponents.<sup>7</sup> Campbell insulted, berated, and pummeled his detractors, and they were pleased to return the favor. 'Mr. Campbell you are a man of *consummate cunning* . . . I do solemnly avow to you my belief that you are an enemy of Jesus Christ, and working enormous power of mischief to man,' a Princeton-trained Presbyterian charged in a pamphlet he distributed across Kentucky in 1838.<sup>8</sup> The pioneering role of Campbell in the expansion of the sectarian press (one biographer called him 'the John the Baptist of religious publishing') demonstrates that there was more than one evangelical print culture in nineteenth century America.

This essay examines Alexander Campbell's early career as a printer and publisher, focusing on the form and production of his voluminous publications in the decade before 1830, when he

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evangelicalism.' See Carwardine, 'Unity, Pluralism, and the Spiritual Market-Place: Interdenominational Competition in the Early American Republic,' in R.N. Swanson, ed., *Unity and Diversity in the Church* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 297-335; Berends, "'Thus Saith the Lord': The Use of the Bible by Southern Evangelicals in the Era of the American Civil War,' D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1997.

7. Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler, eds., *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

8. David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Nord, *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Candy Gunther Brown, *Word in the World: Evangelical Reading, Writing, and Publishing in America, 1789-1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). See also Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). David Morgan has shown that the Millerites and the Adventists created alternative visual cultures to resist national benevolent work such as that done by the American Tract Society and the American Sunday School Union. *Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. chapters 4 and 5. The standard history of American journalism does not treat religious journals as newspapers, a practice that persists in more recent work on the subject. Cataloguing practices have imposed a wall of separation between 'secular newspapers' and 'religious periodicals.' The relationship between religious publications, 'civil society,' and the 'public sphere' remains unclear. On political newspapers, see Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 250 Years, 1690-1940* (New York: Macmillan, 1941) and Jeffrey Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers: Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001). On religious newspapers, see Wesley Norton, *Religious Newspapers in the Old Northwest to 1861* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1977); Henry Smith Stroupe, *The Religious Press in the South Atlantic States, 1802-1865: An Annotated Bibliography* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1956); and Berends, "'Thus Saith the Lord.'

ended production of the *Christian Baptist* to begin the *Millennial Harbinger*, the journal he would edit until his death in 1866. Campbell and his father Thomas had arrived in America as Ulster Presbyterians, but within a few years briefly became Baptists before denouncing all established denominations and organizing their own church. By 1830, Campbell had settled into his own path, and he used his publications to gain a broad audience, sustain his large family, and elect him to Virginia's constitutional convention in 1829. He built his reputation not on his skill in the pulpit (it was admitted even by his admirers that he had very little), but on the printed accounts of his extraordinary public debates and his monthly religious journal. Unlike earlier preachers who had used print to supplement their oratorical skills, such as Elias Smith and George Whitefield, Campbell used his speaking to supplement his printing.<sup>9</sup> His success suggested not only the importance of sectarian debate to religious publishing in the early United States, but also the importance of the Protestant press in the development of printing in the trans-Allegheny region. Campbell energetically embraced the role of the printer-publisher by writing, printing, distributing, and selling his books and newspapers from his modest office fifty miles southwest of Pittsburgh.

#### *Campbell's Early Publications*

Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander were acquainted with the use of print in sectarian controversy long before they moved to America.<sup>10</sup> American Protestant printing had trans-Atlantic

9. Selina Campbell, among others, later regretted that few of her husband's sermons were printed. 'Writing sermons was exceedingly irksome and distasteful to him . . . only two or three have been preserved; and these are not verbatim reports.' Archibald McLean, *Alexander Campbell as a Preacher, A Study* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1908), 9, quoted in Paul A. Verkruyse, 'The Rhetoric of Restorationism: Alexander Campbell and the Rhetoric of Affect,' Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1995, 22-23. Selina Campbell is quoted on 23. This was published as *Prophet, Pastor, and Patriarch: The Rhetorical Leadership of Alexander Campbell* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2005).

10. In spite of Campbell's importance and a rich tradition of scholarship on him within the Christian movement, there is no critical biography. In addition to the standard account of Campbell's life, Robert Richardson's *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1868, 1869), I have relied on two fine unpublished studies, Eva Jean Wrather, 'Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom, A Biography,' copy in

precedents just as revivals did. In Presbyterian Ulster, a lively pamphlet literature nurtured bitter schisms, and from across Ireland, Catholics adept at using print to support their cause made their way to the United States. Methodists on both sides of the Atlantic recruited converts with tracts, and American Methodist itinerants were formally charged not only to preach the gospel but also to sell books. As David Nord and Nathan Hatch have shown, the growth of the religious press was at the heart of the creation of a popular literature in the early republic.<sup>11</sup>

Thomas Campbell fled to the United States to escape the warring Ulster Presbyterians only to find the disputes of the Old World flourishing in the New. Soon after his arrival in western Pennsylvania, he withdrew from the Seceder Presbyterians when his desire to admit non-members to communion brought him into conflict with church leaders.<sup>12</sup> Significantly, he chose to print his reasons for doing so. The only reply the elder Campbell could imagine to 'the violent assaults of his quondam friends, his *co-presbyters*' was a printed one, fixed forever on the page, stable and unyielding.<sup>13</sup>

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the Disciples of Christ Historical Society [hereafter DCHS] and Rosemary Jeanne Cobb, 'Touchstones in the Life of Alexander Campbell: An Historical Narrative' (1999), copy in Archives and Special Collections, T.W. Phillips Memorial Library, Bethany College, Bethany, W. Va. The first part of Wrather's 3,800-page manuscript, edited by D. Duane Cummins, was published as *Alexander Campbell. Adventurer in Freedom, a Literary Biography* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2005). On Wrather's extraordinary lifelong pursuit of Campbell, see Clinton J. Holloway, "A Spirit of Inquiry": Eva Jean Wrather and Alexander Campbell,' *Discipliana* 63 (Spring, 2003): 3-12. Also Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 68-81.

11. Matthew Carey, the well-known Philadelphia printer, was born in Dublin, John England, who emigrated in 1820 to become the first Bishop of Charleston, had for many years edited a journal in Cork, and he began publishing the first Catholic newspaper in the United States in Charleston in 1822. Peter Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism: The Historical Perspective, 1610-1970* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987), 104; J.R.R. Adams, *The Printed Word and the Common Man: Popular Culture in Ulster, 1700-1900* (Belfast: Queen's University, 1987); Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 141-6; Nord, *Faith in Reading*.

12. Campbell was a member of the Old Light Antiburgher Sect of the Seceder Presbyterian Church. On Ulster Presbyterians, see H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood, Jr., *Ulster and North America: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Scotch-Irish* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), especially S.J. Connolly, 'Ulster Presbyterians: Religion, Culture, and Politics, 1660-1850,' and Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism*.

13. Alexander Campbell, [hereafter AC] *Memoirs of Elder Thomas Campbell* (Cincinnati, 1861), 12.

When his family joined Campbell in Pennsylvania after a two-year separation, they found him preparing to print his manuscript. 'On our arrival in this New World, October 5th, 1809, we found [Thomas Campbell] engaged in writing and publishing *A Declaration and Address*,' Alexander recalled. Father and son were overjoyed to find they had arrived independently at similar doctrinal positions during their separation, and they labored together over the proofs of the *Declaration*. A copy of the first edition bears Alexander's notations for the printer.<sup>14</sup> The piece ultimately became a founding document of the Christian movement, declaring Campbell's vision for restoring the principles of primitive Christian unity. "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent," Campbell famously wrote.<sup>15</sup>

Thomas Campbell called his work a 'declaration,' as the archaic definition of 'publish,' meaning to publicly declare, had not yet acquired its more recent usage, which yokes the term to print. The Campbells drew from a rich tradition of Scottish rhetoric and philosophy in their view that language was a transparent window into truth, a means to communicate 'fixed verities.'<sup>16</sup> When Alexander studied at the University of Glasgow for a year, he learned how printed language furthered human progress and was superior to speech. 'WRITING is an improvement upon speech, and of course must have been posterior to it,' he wrote in a university essay in December 1808. 'May we not exclaim happy we! who live in an age of such knowledge . . . we have seen the darkness dispelled.'<sup>17</sup> Alexander later explicitly applied the principles

14. *Memoirs of Elder Thomas Campbell*, 8–24, quotes on 8, 22; Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington* (Washington, Penn.: Brown & Sample, 1809). For a facsimile of copy of the 'Address' with Alexander Campbell's markings, held at DCHS, see <[http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/icampbell/da/da\\_reader.html](http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/icampbell/da/da_reader.html)>.

15. Quoted in Harrell, *Quest for a Christian America*, 6.

16. James A. Berlin, 'The Transformation of Invention in Nineteenth Century American Rhetoric,' *The Southern Speech Communication Journal* 46 (Spring 1981): 292–304, quote on 302.

17. Lester G. McAllister, ed., *Alexander Campbell at Glasgow University 1808–09* (Nashville, Tenn.: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1971), 25–26.

of Scottish rhetoric in a sermon on Romans 8:3. 'Words are signifiers of ideas or thoughts . . . Words that in themselves are quite intelligible, may become difficult to understand, in different connexions and circumstances,' he told his congregation.<sup>18</sup>

The view that truth could be transparently communicated in printed language lay at the heart of the Campbells' scheme to end sectarian squabbling and restore a Christian unity like that which they believed had prevailed among early Christians (hence the Christian movement's association with 'restorationism.') If Christians would accept the meaning of words in the Bible as determined simply by the rules of language, the truth would foster universal agreement, Campbell argued. 'Let *us* do as we are [in the Bible] expressly told *they* did; say as *they* said,' he wrote.<sup>19</sup>

Yet things were not quite so simple. By repeatedly declaring that the Bible was self-evidently true, the Campbells laid bare their conviction that people needed to be persuaded of this self-evident truth. In an era of sectarian debate and a proliferation of things to read, the Bible's self-sufficiency might be easily overlooked. And in this lay the source of the Campbells' obsessions with print. Readers apparently needed specific instruction as to how exactly the Bible was all-sufficient and self-evidently true, something the Campbells were quite willing to offer. After 1809, both father and son made print essential to their cause.

The text of the *Declaration* itself evidenced their extraordinary commitment to print. An extended 'Postscript' called for publication of two other works to promote 'the grand object of the Association'—Christian unity. The *Christian Catechism* would 'indicate the perfect sufficiency' of the Scriptures 'independent of human inference.' Campbell also proposed a monthly religious journal that would appear beginning in 1810, 'a work entitled the *Christian Monitor*, each number to consist of 24 pages, stitched in

18. 'The Substance of a sermon delivered before the Redstone Baptist Association . . . on the 1st September, 1816,' (Steubenville, Ohio: James Wilson, 1816), 5.

19. Richardson, *Memoirs*, 10.



blue, price 12½ cents.' Neither was ever published. The expense, the need for subscribers (the *Monitor* was to begin with no fewer than 500 subscriptions), and scarcity and expense of paper (a lack of paper of good quality delayed the publication of the *Declaration and Address*), apparently combined to hinder both projects. As late as 1819, even the tireless American Bible Society retreated from a plan to print Bibles in Lexington, Kentucky, because it found that western paper was expensive and poorly made, and skilled printers were scarce.<sup>20</sup>

Yet western Pennsylvania and the upper Ohio already had a rich printing tradition by 1809. Thomas Campbell chose William Sample to print his *Declaration* in the *Washington Reporter* because he regarded him as the foremost printer in the region. To be regarded as such was no mean accomplishment.<sup>21</sup> The press in Washington County [Pa.] alone had spewed newspapers at an alarming rate beginning in the 1780s, particularly during the Whiskey Rebellion of the 1790s, and many of these printers worked into the next century.<sup>22</sup> By some accounts, the expansion of the press in western Pennsylvania in this period overshadowed the eastern part of the state. Books printed on Pittsburgh presses reached Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio. In the fifty

20. T. Campbell, 'Postscript,' *Declaration and Address*, 56. Joseph Doddridge apologized from the nearby town of Wellsburgh [Va.] in 1823 for the delayed appearance of his book, *The Notes on the Settlement and Wars of the Western Country*, because of the lack of paper. 'The work only awaits the fulfillment of a contract for paper, rendered impracticable for some time past, by the want of water in the stream on which the mill is situated.' Doddridge, *Logan: The Last of the Race of Shikellemus, Chief of the Cayuga Nation* (Buffaloe Creek, Brooke County, Va.: Buffaloe Printing Office, 1823); David Paul Nord, 'Free Grace, Free Books, Free Riders: The Economics of Religious Publishing in Early Nineteenth-Century America,' *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 106 (October, 1996): 241-272, esp. 255-56.

21. The region had a contentious tradition of print stretching back into the 1780s. Pasley notes several Republican and Federalist papers in the region between 1795 and 1814. *Tyranny of Printers*, 107, 117, 127, 282, 235, 351. See also Delf Norona, ed., *West Virginia Imprints, 1790-1863* (Moundsville, W.Va.: West Virginia Library Association, 1958); Otis K. Rice, 'West Virginia Printers and Their Work, 1790-1830,' *West Virginia History* 14 (July, 1953): 297-338; Alfred Creigh, *History of Washington County*, 2nd ed. (Harrisburg, Penn.: B. Singerly, 1871), 350-51.

22. Presbyterian laymen were leaders in the Whiskey Rebellion, while the Presbyterian clergy uniformly opposed it. See Ronald W. Long, 'The Presbyterians and the Whiskey Rebellion,' *Journal of Presbyterian History* 43 (1965): 28-36.

years after 1780, some sixteen Washington County printers produced at least fourteen separate serials.<sup>23</sup>

William Sample began printing the *Reporter* in 1810, taking over the political journal from Benjamin Brown. Little is known about him. He kept a modest bookstore on the premises, selling blank books, almanacs, and pamphlets. His paper, for which he charged an annual subscription of two dollars, copied pieces from papers in London, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Richmond, Virginia.<sup>24</sup> Sample printed the *Reporter* for almost a decade, gave it up for three years, and then continued for four more. His restlessness was likely prompted by the precariousness of the living to be earned from printing.

Sample's relationship with the Campbells underscores the close connection between political and religious printing in the period. Both were dominated by a caustic tone of controversy. Alexander Campbell habitually warned his followers against political ambition. In answer to the question 'ought Christians to take an active part in politics?' Campbell bluntly answered that they should not.<sup>25</sup> But his language, like that of many Christian folk in the early republic, was steeped in republicanism. July 4, 1776, he declared, was 'a day to be remembered as was Jewish Passover . . . this revolution, taken in all its influences, will make men free indeed.'<sup>26</sup> Neither printers like Sample nor their readers insisted on a wall of separation between church and state in their periodicals. Sample exchanged papers with religious editors, copied their notices and their stories in their newspapers, and printed Baptist Association minutes for profit. Readers in the early republic were persuaded by polemic in both the church and in the statehouse.

23. The number is estimated from a search of Washington, Pennsylvania, serials published between 1780 and 1830 in WorldCat.

24. *Washington Reporter*, June 4 and June 18, 1810. In 1818 Sample printed the minutes of the Redstone Baptist Association.

25. Harrell, *Question for a Christian America*, 57.

26. AC, "An Oration in Honor of the Fourth of July, 1830," quoted in Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 71. On Christian republicanism, see Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 53-138; on controversial literature, see Ralph Leslie Rusk, *The Literature on the Middle Western Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925), 204-35.

Alexander Campbell's work appeared in print for the first time in March 1810, when Sample printed two poems over the pseudonym 'Juvenescence.' A third poem appeared in early April.<sup>27</sup> In May, the 22-year-old entered the fray of American journalism in earnest with the first of a series of ten essays. He did not find his late arrival to Washington County any cause for reticence in taking a controversial stand. Adopting the persona of a young woman named Clarinda, in the manner of Joseph Addison's *Spectator*, Campbell condemned the frivolous social gatherings of young people in the area, demanding that they embrace more serious pursuits. By the end of the infamous series, 'Clarinda' was bold enough to promise to insert a respondent's letter in the body of her own essay, a direct challenge to Sample's editorial authority. Campbell liberally quoted Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* and Addison throughout the series. One example is particularly telling. 'Witness the immortal Addison, whose words I shall now quote:—"Censure, says a late ingenious writer, is the tax a man pays to the public for being eminent."<sup>28</sup>

When Campbell's work appeared in print again in 1816, he had become a naturalized citizen, married Margaret Brown, fathered several children, and been ordained as a Presbyterian before briefly reinventing himself as an unorthodox and contentious Baptist. After finally rejecting the practice of infant baptism as unscriptural, he persuaded his father and others in his neighborhood to leave the Presbyterians and found the Redstone Baptist Association.

Like his reputation as a sectarian firebrand, Campbell's circle of printing contacts was expanding, ranging from Pittsburgh west to the Ohio River.<sup>29</sup> That year, 'The Substance of a Sermon delivered before the Redstone Baptist Association' appeared from the Steubenville, Ohio, printer James Wilson. This became known as

27. *Washington Reporter*, 'On the Death of a Friend,' March 12, 1810; 'The Ocean,' March 26, 1810; 'On Hope,' April 2, 1810.

28. Campbell and his wife later named their daughter, born in 1821, after Campbell's pseudonym 'Clarinda.' (Richardson, *Memoirs*, 46). Addison is quoted in 'Clarinda, No. 6,' June 25, 1810.

29. It is not known why Campbell chose Wilson as the printer; the Redstone Association's minutes were printed in Pittsburgh. This group encompassed Baptists on both sides of the Ohio. Steubenville was known as a center for paper production but had few printers.

Campbell's 'Sermon on the Law,' a piece that created such controversy that it eventually forced him to break from the Baptists entirely.<sup>30</sup> In keeping with the conventions of his day, Campbell insisted that he printed the sermon only after repeated requests that he do so. Wilson obliged the author by printing 'published by request' on the cover.

The pamphlet is full of Campbell's comments on the production and language of the piece itself. He began with an apology that the printed sermon was not 'verbatim the same' as the one delivered in the pulpit, offering insight into how speech was transformed into print. A printed sermon, he explained, excised the repetitions 'needful to impress the subject on the mind of the most attentive hearer: but when written, the reader may pause, read again, and thus arrive at the meaning.' He chose to retain the 'plainness of style' he used in the extempore version, he said, because his audience was comprised not of the 'wise and prudent,' but 'babes, the weak and foolish.' For their benefit, Campbell immodestly explained, he laid aside 'the vail [*sic*] of what is falsely called eloquence' in order to present the plain testimony of God.<sup>31</sup>

Campbell was not being coy in seeking notoriety in print. He explicitly told his readers that he sought it. Unlike his father, who had counted on the unifying power of print, Alexander used it to divide people. He expected to pay the tax of censure for his uncompromising opinions. But he believed that debate found out truth, and he shrewdly recognized that both his common-sense vein of Biblical interpretation and his polemic style would find an audience in the early republic. By including a long apology in the

30. Some proposed that Campbell be tried for heresy after the sermon appeared. *Millennial Harbinger*, 1846, 493, quoted in Verkruyse, 'Rhetoric of Restorationism,' 24.

31. 'The Substance of a sermon delivered before the Redstone Baptist Association . . . on the 1st September, 1816,' (Steubenville, Ohio: James Wilson, 1816), 3-4. The *Western Herald*, established in 1806, was the first paper published in Steubenville. The town had a steam paper mill as early as 1813, and by 1822 a paper manufacturing firm there employed 61 people. James Wilson also published a number of Presbyterian works in this period. On Steubenville printing and papermaking, see Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Pioneer Printing in Ohio* (Cincinnati: The Printing High School, 1943), 8-9; Florence Wilkie, 'Early Printing in Ohio, 1793-1820,' Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1933.

printed sermon pamphlet, Campbell shifted his readers' attention from the epistle to the Romans to his own opinions. In this, he embodied the contradiction of the Protestant preacher and printer, one that lay at the heart of his restorationist doctrine. By directing his reader's attention to the Scriptures, he drew attention to himself as the one pointing to them.<sup>32</sup> By denying the necessity of interpretation, of merely pointing out the plain meaning of the text, Campbell asserted his authority over readers who would apparently recognize the truth only with his help.

#### *Printing the Debates*

In the 1820s, Campbell's career as a printer began in earnest. He began the decade by printing a series of anonymous letters in someone else's weekly.<sup>33</sup> By 1830, he was known beyond the Upper Ohio as the editor of his own religious monthly, and publisher of a new translation of the New Testament, a series of debates, a hymnal, and other works from his own press in Buffaloe. The *Christian Baptist*, which appeared in 1823, was successful enough that Campbell began a more ambitious monthly in 1830 that he renamed the *Millennial Harbinger*, using new equipment in a new building constructed for that purpose.

Campbell's debate with the Presbyterian John Walker in June, 1820 marked a turning point in Campbell's career. His printed version of the debates became an event in its own right. The book transformed the initial meeting across space and time. What began as a local argument became first a regional, and then a national, event. Both Campbell and Walker received letters from people they did not know living in places that they had never visited in response to the published account of their debate.

32. Daniel Walker Howe has made a similar point about the language of the Whigs that shows how they were torn between their desire to embrace democracy and their impulse to direct others to engage in reform. *The Political Culture of the American Whigs*, 27.

33. Campbell's 31 separate letters appeared in William Sample's *Reporter* beginning on April 17, 1820. Writing over the pen name 'Candidus,' Campbell opposed the formation of a local moral society as 'subversive' of the true principles of true religion and civil liberty.'

The story of the debate began when an Ohio revival netted an unusually large number of souls. A Baptist in the neighborhood, incensed that a local Presbyterian seemed to be reaping the harvest for his own church, summoned Campbell to refute the practice of infant baptism. And so Campbell met John Walker for two days in June in Mount Pleasant, Ohio. Such debates were the theological equivalents of political entertainments.<sup>34</sup> As in a duel, the opponents used an elaborate code of conduct, negotiated at length about what topics could be addressed, the venue, and who would moderate or judge. Judges had the power to interrupt if the strict 40-minute speaking limit was violated, if the subjects addressed varied from those agreed on in advance (in this case, 'first, the subjects, and secondly, the mode of Christian baptism'), and to declare the debate ended. The debate was to adjourn only when 'the subjects [were] discussed to the satisfaction of the judges.'<sup>35</sup> Campbell showed up with an armful of reference books, some of them editions more than a century old that he had brought from Ulster and Glasgow.<sup>36</sup>

The audience in Mount Pleasant was reported to be a 'vast concourse of people,' but the importance of the printed debate easily eclipsed the event itself.<sup>37</sup> This two-day affair eventually spawned more than one thousand pages of print in at least four separate books and a series of articles. As Campbell's memoirist modestly put it, 'the effects of the discussion were widely extended by its

34. E. Brooks Holifield, 'Theology as Entertainment: Oral Debate in American Religion,' *Church History* 67 (September 1998): 499-521.

35. The rules appear in both Campbell's and Walker's books, although their accounts vary slightly. AC, *A Debate On Christian Baptism, Between Mr. John Walker, a Minister of the secession and Alexander Campbell* (Pittsburgh: Eichbaum and Johnston, 1822), page facing the Preface; John Walker, *A Treatise on Baptism: Being a Reply To a Book entitled A DEBATE ON CHRISTIAN BAPTISM* (Mountpleasant, Ohio: B. Wright & B. Bates, 1824), 4.

36. Campbell brought William Wake, trans., *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers* (London, 1710); three volumes of Lewis DuPin's *Compendious Account of the Councils* (Dublin, 1723); Eusebius, *History of the Church* (London, 1709), which he identified as 'Ecclesiastical History'; George Campbell's *Translation of the Four Gospels*; several Greek lexicons, and Greek, Latin, and French New Testaments. For a complete list, see AC, *A Debate on Christian Baptism*, viii.

37. Obituary of AC, *Wheeling Intelligencer*, March 6, 1866, 1.

publication.<sup>38</sup> In fact, the debate was reinvented in Campbell's account, and because his was the first and most extensively circulated (his opponent waited four years before printing his reply), Campbell's version prevailed.

Campbell began working on the printed version of the debate within the month and published it as *Infant sprinkling proved to be a human tradition* by the end of the year. He claimed that he drew from three sources: notes taken during the debate by one Salathiel Curtis, Esq., those taken by his father, and those he took himself. Characteristically, Campbell argued that he printed the account only to expose the 'sophistry of [Walker's] own reasoning,' not to prove 'our own principles and practice. We only attempt to unloose the snares in which he has entangled himself.'<sup>39</sup>

Campbell paid Steubenville printer James Wilson to produce a large edition of 1,000 copies. The title page declared Campbell both the author and 'publisher,' suggesting his financial interest in the book. An advertisement (probably placed by Campbell) appeared in late November in the *Washington Reporter*, listing establishments in Washington [Pa.], Caponsburgh [probably Canonsburgh, Pa.], and West-Middletown [Pa.] where the book could be bought, 'Price 75 cents, bound in leather, published by A. Campbell.'<sup>40</sup> Samuel Ralston, a Presbyterian pastor from Washington, could not hold his tongue after reading Campbell's book. He sent a reply to the *Presbyterian Magazine* in Philadelphia, one of the leading Presbyterian journals in the country, where his ten letters appeared beginning in June, 1821. A year after the event, then, printed word of the debate began to reach readers far beyond the Upper Ohio.<sup>41</sup>

38. Richardson, *Memoirs*, 30.

39. AC, *A Debate On Christian Baptism*, vi.

40. *Washington Reporter*, November 27, 1820.

41. Ralston likely sent his piece to the magazine in Philadelphia in part to avoid the expense of having it printed himself in pamphlet form. They appear in June 1821, 249-64; August 1821, 337-48; November 1821, 486-95; and December 1821, 542-48. *Presbyterian Magazine* (Philadelphia: Littell & Henry). The masthead read, 'Buy the truth and sell it not, Prov. xxiii.23.'

Meanwhile, the first edition of *Infant Sprinkling* exhausted, Campbell decided to bring out a second edition in 1822. For this job, he chose one of the leading printing firms in Pittsburgh, Eichbaum & Johnston.<sup>42</sup> Campbell claimed that he received 'sundry applications for the copy-right for particular states—for Ohio, for New York, and Maryland.' He chose the Pittsburgh firm for several reasons. First, they would register copyright for the entire country rather than just one state. Second, they were well positioned to gain 'greater facility . . . for a general dispersion of the work,' as well as a 'neater execution' than a mere newspaper office could offer him. Finally, Pittsburgh was close enough to Buffaloe that Campbell himself could correct the proofs. Peeved that Ralston had not replied in a local forum, and claiming that he had had some difficulty in acquiring copies of Ralston's writings from Philadelphia, Campbell retitled the work, and added an appendix containing his 'strictures' on Ralston's letters for the second edition. Eichbaum & Johnson offered Campbell 150 copies of the *Debates* and the equivalent of 150 dollars worth of other books in the copyright agreement.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, John Walker himself decided to enter the printing fray. His account of the event appeared in 1824 from a Mount Pleasant firm, and included a reply to Ralston. The following year, Ralston replied to Campbell's reply in a second edition of his letters, which also included a reply to Walker.<sup>44</sup>

What was going on? Five years after the event, honor was still being challenged and ink was still being spilled across three

42. AC, *A Debate on Christian Baptism*. William Eichbaum was postmaster and city treasurer; his brother-in-law and partner Samuel Johnston was county treasurer and later secretary of Pittsburgh Public Schools. The firm published an array of almanacs, school books, hymnals, and religious pamphlets. Robert Reichner, *Early Pittsburgh Printers* (Pittsburgh: Taylor Allderdice Print Shop, n.d.).

43. AC, 'Lawrence Greatrake's Calumnies Repell'd,' (Buffaloe, Brooke County, Va.: A. Campbell, 1825), 24-27.

44. Walker, *Treatise on Baptism*; Samuel Ralston, *A review of a debate on Christian baptism*, 2nd ed. (Washington, Pa.: John Grayson, 1825). Ralston's reply may have first appeared in pamphlet form.



states and one thousand pages in a series of polemic books and pamphlets that took an oddly epistolary form. It was as if Campbell and Walker were still arguing in Mount Pleasant when Ralston appeared belatedly and insisted on putting in his two-cents' worth. This pattern would be repeated many times, as Campbell published accounts of his subsequent debates, including one with the Presbyterian William MacCalla in Kentucky in 1823, and his 1829 debate with British social reformer Robert Owen in Cincinnati. Others in the Christian movement printed similar accounts. A pastor debated with a Baptist in Henry County, Georgia for five straight days, published an account in his own newspaper, and was soon overwhelmed by readers who continued to respond more than a year later. Some of the letters 'took six pages of fine print that required a reading glass. The editor's reply, in two installments, ran about eight such pages.'<sup>45</sup>

Campbell's published debates became an event in themselves. By portraying oratory on the page, Campbell cast himself as a master of both. The publicity brought by printing the debates suited Campbell perfectly. 'One debate is worth a year of preaching,' he said.<sup>46</sup> The books' success only encouraged his satirical style. Several readers, including Sidney Rigdon (later a well-known Mormon convert), had not been within 100 miles of Mount Pleasant, Ohio on June 20, 1820. But when they read an account of the event, they were compelled to make the long journey to Buffaloe to meet the man who had debated Walker.<sup>47</sup>

45. The debate with Owen was published in three editions in 1829, in Bethany, St. Louis, and Cincinnati, and again in several more editions by the 1850s. *A Debate On Christian Baptism Between the Rev. W. L. MacCalla, a Presbyterian teacher, and Alexander Campbell* (Buffaloe, 1823); *A Debate on the Evidences of Christianity . . . : Between Robert Owen of New Lanark, Scotland, and Alexander Campbell, of Bethany, Virginia* (Bethany, Va.: AC, 1829); J. Edward Moseley, *Disciples of Christ in Georgia* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), 94.

46. Hiram J. Lester, 'AC,' in John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, ed., *American National Biography*, 24 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4: 1 267-270, quote on 268.

47. Wrather, 'Alexander Campbell,' 246-7.

*The Press at Buffaloe*

Campbell was a capable and enterprising man, but opening a printing office was a formidable task. When his pamphlets and books were produced by printers at a considerable distance from Buffaloe, reading proofs was difficult, so he decided to print his works himself. However, the independence of his shop came at a cost: printing was a demanding craft, financially, physically, and intellectually. Even as master of his own shop, Campbell was a mere apprentice to the 'art and mystery of letter-press printing.' Yet Campbell was more than a printer. He controlled both the production of his books and newspapers and their distribution and sales. He financed his publishing through a combination of the unsteady income from the sale of his books, the modest profits accrued from selling dry goods, his position as postmaster, and the tuition from his school. Campbell's model of the printer-publisher was similar to that pursued in the 1790s by the printers and book-sellers who had specialized in the reprint trade in the cities of the eastern seaboard. Like them, Campbell was not in his trade only for money; unlike them, he was after something more than republican virtue. Doing well by doing good, for Campbell, meant persuading people of the peculiar power of a firmly Christian republicanism. The rough trans-Allegheny region from which this jack-of-all-trades plied his business only seemed to bolster his claim to the common-sense views he espoused. Campbell's version of the self-made man shed his immigrant past and university training to embrace the frontier as the quintessential American.<sup>48</sup>

In 1823 Campbell opened his own printing office in a 'little frame box of a house just sixteen feet square' built on the edge of a creek so that the pressmen wet the paper by 'dipping it directly into the stream.' He likely spent several hundred dollars to set up the shop. He used a wooden hand press bought from a western

48. William R. Sutton, *Journeyman for Jesus: Evangelical Artisans Confront Capitalism in Jacksonian Baltimore* (State College: Penn State University Press, 1998), 146. James N. Green, 'The Rise of Book Publishing in the United States, 1790-1840,' in *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture and Society in Early America*, vol. 2 of *A History of the Book in America*, Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

Pennsylvania firm. Type, the largest single investment, could cost anywhere from 52 cents to \$1.25 per pound, and the ambitious projects, such as a hymnal and an edition of the New Testament (1826), that Campbell undertook in his first few years indicate that he would need an array of the available fonts and sizes.<sup>49</sup> In addition to a press and type, a shop required banks, mallets, shooting-sticks, composing sticks, pelts, blankets, wood, tympan, soap, parchment, and chemicals such as lye, pearlash, and various oils. A shop's equipment saw heavy use, and regular maintenance and repair was needed, sometimes by skilled cabinetmakers.

Campbell's investment extended to the men he hired. Although he began with a single partner when the shop opened in 1823, he soon hired several men who either boarded in his household or with one of the tenants on his farm. William Cooper Howells, father of the author William Dean Howells, worked in Campbell's shop in the late 1820s, and left a less than glowing assessment of Campbell's relations with his laborers and tenants. Campbell's tenant Mr. Young, who boarded the transient printers, was a member of his church. The boarding accounts were a source of a 'good deal of heart-burning' between Campbell and his tenant, who received nothing for his trouble in housing the workers, while Campbell took money for board out of the printer's wages. Campbell was known to be 'rich and sharp at trade,' one 'greatly disposed to lord it over his poor and dependent friends. He was pretty hard in dealing, as I found out,' Howells wrote, 'and he had little natural sympathy with those who had not or could not acquire a worldly competence.' Nevertheless, Howells himself found Campbell amiable enough, and he apparently inspired some loyalty. At least two men, Robert Buchanan and William Llewellyn, worked with Campbell for more than two decades, remaining until their deaths.<sup>50</sup>

49. William Cooper Howells, *Recollections of a Life in Ohio from 1813 to 1840* (1895: Delmar, N.Y.: Scholars Facsimiles & Reprints, Inc., 1977), 164. A Boston firm valued its press at \$136 in an 1805 inventory, but the type owned by the shop was worth more than \$600. Rollo G. Silver, *The American Printer, 1787-1825* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967), 64.

50. Buchanan died in 1849; Llewellyn in 1858. William Dean Howells apparently also worked for a time as a young man in Campbell's shop. Howells, *Recollections of Life in*

A constant supply of ink and paper was difficult to maintain in the trans-Allegheny. With few exceptions, locally made paper was of poor quality and available only intermittently. Papermaking machines did not appear in the region before about 1830, so all paper was laboriously made by hand. Pleas for cotton and linen rags for paper production appeared regularly in newspaper columns and on signs hung outside printing shops. Campbell insisted on using paper brought from Pittsburgh. Ink was also difficult to find, particularly the higher quality required for books. 'There is no ink in this place except some we have made ourselves,' a printer reported from Lexington, Kentucky, in 1816. In Philadelphia, ink sold for 40 to 50 cents per pound, usually by the keg.<sup>51</sup>

Printing was demanding work physically and intellectually. Composing required dexterity of hand as well as a quick eye. Speed was essential. Often compositors worked from manuscript copy, and they commonly moaned about poor handwriting, as it slowed their work. The author of one printer's manual insisted that the job did not require merely 'following the copy,' but also that the compositor be 'engaged in reading and spelling . . . taking care to space and justify the matter.' Better work was done, he argued, when the mind of the printer was engaged. The repetitive motion required to compose and quickly redistribute type back into the proper compartments could result in injury, and workers were cautioned against taking up too much type at once, as the heavy lead pieces could harm the wrists. Once the careful work of composing and locking

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*Ohio*, 165; Wrather, 'Alexander Campbell,' 1331-33, DCHS. Howells was no longer working for Campbell by 1833, when he was printing in Wheeling. Edwin H. Carpenter, Jr., ed., Emily Ellsworth Ford Skeel, comp., *A Bibliography of the Writings of Noah Webster* (New York: New York Public Library, 1958), 96.

51. Rags were in such short supply for papermaking in America that after about 1810, most were imported from Europe. On papermaking in the trans-Allegheny, see Frances L. S. Dugan and Jacqueline P. Bull, eds., *Bluegrass Craftsman: Being the Reminiscences of Ebenezer Hiram Stedman Papermaker 1808-1885* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959), and 'Memorial of the Paper Manufacturers,' 1842, Miscellaneous Pamphlets Collection, American Antiquarian Society [hereafter MWA]. On Campbell's paper supplier, see copy of his letter to Selina Campbell, December 10, 1829, in which he instructs her to send '200 dollars to Pittsburg to Messr Brown and Son for paper,' in 'letters written by AC during his stay in Richmond, Virginia,' Wrather Papers, DCHS. Quote from Silver, *The American Printer*, 36.

trays of type had been accomplished, the next task was to 'pull a proof.' Campbell's press was likely a 'two-pull' model that required an elaborate series of moves and tremendous strength to operate.<sup>52</sup>

Campbell's first pressman and partner was Solomon Sala. The son of a German printer, he was born in 1800 in York County, Pennsylvania. His father Jacob produced German books from a series of locations that track him slowly moving west from Hagerstown and Frederick, Maryland, to Somerset County, Pennsylvania (east of Pittsburgh) to Canton, Ohio, between 1803 and 1831. Jacob Sala's titles included obstetrics and veterinary manuals (including the well-known *Aristotle's Masterpiece*), schoolbooks, Lutheran catechisms, and hymnbooks. Solomon learned the trade from his father, and worked in Canton, Ohio before taking the job with Campbell. When he left Campbell's shop in 1825, he printed the weekly *True Republican and Wellsburgh Advertiser* in nearby Wellsburg, Virginia before returning to Canton to print *Der Vaterlandsfreund und Westliche Beobachter*, perhaps with his father.<sup>53</sup> Sala and his wife, Delilah, were members of Campbell's church when they lived in Buffaloe. Campbell's pressmen routinely mixed work and worship. William Howells described one, probably the Welshman William Llewellyn, working about 1829 as a 'character' who 'worked at press, set type, made verses, led in Campbellite meetings, sang hymns and sentimental songs, and wrote letters to the postmasters of numerous villages or new towns to inquire if they did not want him to start a newspaper in the place.'<sup>54</sup>

A battered account book contains sixteen pages that record Sala's work with Campbell.<sup>55</sup> Even these scant records suggest the

52. C.S. Van Winkle, *The Printer's Guide; or an Introduction to the Art of Printing: including an essay on punctuation, and remarks on orthography*, (New York, 1818; New York: Garland Publishing, 1981), quote on 170; viii, 90-104.

53. Sala printed *The Christian's Duty: Exhibited in a Series of Hymns*, 4th ed. (Canton, Ohio: Printed by Jacob & Solomon Sala, 1822). Solomon Sala sold the *Vaterlandsfreund* to Peter Kaufman in 1831.

54. On the Salas, see *The Campbell Light* (Bethany W. Va., March 1975), 3, copy in the 'Printing Office File,' Wrather Papers, DCHS. On printers, Howells, *Recollections of Life in Ohio*, 164.

55. Solomon Sala Account book, 1823-1837, MWA.

frenetic pace of daily activity at the small office. The book records transactions in Buffalo beginning in 1823, in Wellsburgh, and later in Canton, Ohio. Records show Campbell's shop served as a general mercantile establishment, offering sugar, wheat, corn, meat, hats, buttons, brandy, brooms, paint, nails, blank books, ledgers, almanacs, tobacco, and deer skins. Patrons included Campbell's printers, students at his school, and neighbors. In 1823 Sala recorded accounts paid to three men, William Flanigan, F.D. MacFarland, and a Mr. Farelans, probably all employed in Campbell's shop. Services offered at the shop ranged from horseshoeing to washing and mending. MacFarland bought several pairs of hand-made pantaloons, perhaps made by Sala's wife Delilah or by Margaret Campbell. Between June 1824 and February 1825, printer Robert Buchanan's purchases included copies of the *Christian Baptist*, copies of Campbell's *Debates*, blank books, paper, ten pounds of sugar, muslin, 112 pounds of pork, a coat pattern, and a saddle.

Most of the book is devoted to Sala's composition and presswork on a variety of jobs for Campbell. In addition to the *Christian Baptist* and Campbell's books and pamphlets, Sala composed and printed a number of handbills and 'proposals,' most of which were used to advertise Campbell's other publications. Sala charged rates for composition—20 cents per 1,000 M's—comparable to those charged by other American printers.<sup>56</sup> So, for example, on April 4, 1825, Sala charged Campbell \$6.46 for the composition of 32,388 M's for the *Christian Baptist*, No. 9. Presswork was measured in 'tokens,' usually comprising 250 sheets of paper. Sala charged 25 cents per token. In January, 1825, he used 22 tokens for each number of the *Christian Baptist* (six altogether), earning \$5.50 per number. Sala was apparently responsible for the folding, stitching, packing, and delivering of the *Christian Baptist*, but

56. An 'M' was the standard unit for measuring the length of type set, as an 'm' formed a square, more or less. Rates varied widely. The Boston Master Printer's Association agreed to charge 50 cents per 1,000 M's in 1826, but an undated contract from early in the century in New Hampshire suggested printers there charged 25 cents per 1,000. Silver, *American Printer*, 76, 81.

not proofing, as at one point he paid MacFarland 50 cents to read four proofs. The folding and stitching was probably done by the women of the establishment. Sala also used Campbell's press for other work. He printed a pamphlet, for example, in November 1823 called 'Gospel Discipline,' that has not survived.<sup>57</sup>

Campbell apparently labored together with Sala at the press, but his main job was proofing. Campbell 'became an expert proof-reader,' his memoirist wrote, 'supplied regularly the paper and materials needed, and continued to conduct the printing business with the greatest economy and with surprising activity and success uninterruptedly from this time forward for more than forty years.' 'Surprising activity,' indeed. Over the first seven years, the small office produced an estimated 46,000 volumes of the *Christian Baptist*, in addition to a variety of other ambitious works, including a New Testament, hymnal, and his debates. The firm also printed the schoolbooks, pamphlets, broadsides, and a curious dramatic piece by Joseph Doddridge.<sup>58</sup>

The struggle to make a profit could fray the nerves of the most patient man, and Campbell was not known for his patience. The relatively few printers who prospered were entrepreneurs rather than craftsmen. In addition to printing, some sold books and supplies, published books, or established a number of printing offices. Campbell was successful enough that his enemies charged him with compromising the Gospel for financial gain.<sup>59</sup> He apparently squeezed Sala too hard, for the two men parted company

57. Sala Account Book, MWA; Silver, *The American Printer*, 74, 76-81; Van Winkle, 'Scale for Calculating work,' inserted into front of *Printer's Guide*.

58. Among the works that Campbell printed in Buffalo are the dramatic piece by Doddridge (1823); the pamphlet *Lawrence Greatrake's calumnies repell'd* (1825), which sold for 12½ cents; *The Speller's Guide: A spelling book on a new plan* by Joseph Shreve (1824); and *Observations on the principles of correct education* by J. Heyworth (1823). The press also likely produced broadsides that may not have survived from the 1820s, as two are extant from the 1830s, including 'AC very respectfully informs the ministers and members of the Methodist Society . . .' (1832); and 'The Cholera,' [instructions for avoiding cholera and antidotes and remedies] (1832). See Douglas C. McMurtrie, *West Virginia Imprints, 1791-1830* (Charleston, W. Va.: Charleston High School Print Shop, 1936). Quote from Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (Philadelphia, 1868), 51.

59. For Campbell's rebuttal to this charge, see AC, 'Lawrence Greatrake.'

with some bitterness sometime in 1825, less than two years after they began. Within the year, having established his own paper in Wellsburgh, Sala refused to print a piece submitted to him by Campbell, as Campbell had refused to open the pages of his *Christian Baptist* to Sala's own writing. As it happens, a congregation unhappy with Campbell was founded at about this time in Wellsburgh. Why the two men quarreled—whether over printing, money, or doctrine—is not known. But the eight miles between Wellsburgh and Buffaloe became a very great distance.<sup>60</sup>

*The Christian Baptist and Its Readers*

The survival of Campbell's shop depended on paying readers and reliable distribution. With so many printing establishments failing around him, Campbell published one of the longest running journals of his era. From 1823, his Buffaloe shop published a monthly continuously until his death in 1866. Taking up a set of relatively narrow sectarian concerns (which he ingeniously cast as non-sectarian), Campbell persevered and even prospered in a print market that would seem to pressure editors to eschew narrow opinions to gain a larger audience. Campbell's success with the *Christian Baptist* points to an important characteristic of the religious press in the nineteenth century. In addition to Protestants who sought a broad audience, such as the American Tract Society and American Sunday School Union, sectarians like Campbell successfully used print to draw support for more narrow doctrinal positions. For Campbell and Barton Stone, William Miller, Joseph Smith, and other new American religious movements, print was critical.<sup>61</sup>

60. Sala quoted in AC, 'Lawrence Greatrake,' 22; Solomon Sala, 'To the Public,' *The True Republican and Wellsburgh Advertiser*, April 1, 1826, quoted in 'From Delf Norona notebooks on AC bibliography,' Printing Office File, Wrather Papers, DCHS.

61. Recovering the printing history of the *Christian Baptist* is difficult. It has been reprinted in scores of bound editions since it ceased publication in 1830. Most widely available, online and in microform, is David Staats Burnet's revision of the second edition of the journal, first published in Cincinnati in 1835, which has reappeared in at least fifteen editions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Burnet excised all of the notices from the editor regarding postage, printing, and other such matters. The confused printing history of the *Christian Baptist* is furthered by library cataloging records which customarily do not offer full records on the various volumes of the journal. There is a rich literature on the



Campbell wrote in a voice of scathing satire and ridicule that he used intentionally to build the prophetic tone of his newspaper.<sup>62</sup> His favorite target was other pastors. 'When, then, I hear a modern preacher, either with or without his diploma in his pocket saying that he is an ambassador of Christ, sent by God to preach the gospel,' Campbell wrote in October, 1823, 'I ask him to work a miracle, or afford some divine attestation of his being such a character. If he cannot do this, I mark him down as a knave or an enthusiast; consequently, an impostor, either intentionally or unintentionally.'<sup>63</sup> He later called his tone in the *Christian Baptist* 'the most severe, sarcastic, and ironical' he ever wrote. In 1831, Campbell explained the tone of his earlier writings as a deliberate goad to 'the so-called Christian community.' It was 'an experiment to ascertain whether society could be moved by fear or rage—whether it could be made to feel at all the decisive symptoms of the moral malady which was consuming the last spark of moral life and motion. It operated favorably upon the whole, though very unfavorably to the reputation of its author as respected his "Christian spirit."<sup>64</sup> His tone gained him both scorn and admiration, but it never failed to get attention. His editorial success lured many others in the Christian movement to join him in print. By 1830, seven journals had debuted in the tradition, and two others were proposed that never appeared.<sup>65</sup> By 1860, twenty-five Disciples journals were thriving, creating a sense of unity in print that eluded the divided and dispersed Disciples in practice.

Campbell and other religious editors were heirs to the conventions of eighteenth-century religious and political journalism. Using print at the service of religious dissent had a long tradition

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*Christian Baptist* by historians of the Christian movement. See Robert M. Hall, 'The Christian Baptist (1823-1830): A Study of the Periodical's Influence as Reflected by the Internal Evidences and a Complete Index,' B.Div. Thesis, Butler University School of Religion, 1947; Lee, 'Background of the Christian Baptist'; Gary L. Lee, 'Analysis and Index of the Christian Baptist, 1823-1830,' M.A. thesis, Lincoln Christian Seminary, 1981.

62. Verkruyse, *Prophet, Pastor, and Patriarch*, 75-107.

63. AC, 'The Clergy—No.1,' *Christian Baptist*, October 6, 1823.

64. AC, *Millennial Harbinger*, 1831, quoted in Lee, 'Background of the Christian Baptist.'

65. Albaugh, *American Religious Periodicals*, Vol. 2, 1237-8.

in Anglo-America; it flourished during the English Civil War.<sup>66</sup> In the eighteenth century, political newspapers began to proliferate in Britain and the colonies. Campbell followed these political editors in his taste for polemic and satire, but he also inherited a rich tradition of religious print from George Whitefield and Elias Smith. Whitefield was notoriously canny in his use of newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic. He sent editors his own accounts of his preaching written in the third person, transforming the newspapers themselves into 'revivalists' that spread word of spiritual awakening throughout the colonies. Whitefield's storied partnership with Benjamin Franklin was profitable for both men: Whitefield spread his revival through the newspapers and sermons Franklin printed, and Franklin sold more newspapers.<sup>67</sup>

American Protestants began to reinvent religious printing after the Revolution. Elias Smith, the Massachusetts minister who founded the 'Christian Connection' which later merged with the followers of Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone to create the Disciples of Christ, founded the first religious newspaper in the United States in 1808. Where only 14 religious journals existed before 1789, 172 were founded in the next thirty years. Between 1819 and 1829, when Campbell brought out the *Christian Baptist*, 360 new religious journals appeared. In the Upper Ohio region, Campbell had plenty of competition from political and religious editors. Kentucky and Ohio editors were particularly aggressive, with the first Kentucky newspaper appearing in 1787. The Ohio press soon overtook Kentucky as the most prolific of the American western states. Where in 1800 there was one newspaper to every 34,000 persons in the western states, by 1834, there was one for every 13,000 persons. Religious journals kept pace with the political press, and in many cases surpassed their popularity. Two New York City religious journals claimed circulations in 1829 larger than any

66. C. John Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

67. Timothy D. Hall, *Contested Boundaries: Itinerancy and the Reshaping of the Colonial American Religious World* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994), 76, 83, 131.

other periodical in the world. In the west, the revivals in Kentucky brought out a host of journals in Lexington beginning in 1804. Quaker editor Elisha Bates published prolifically from Mount Pleasant, less than 20 miles east of Bethany across the Ohio, where he would eventually make his case against the Hicksites in print.<sup>68</sup>

Campbell brought out the *Christian Baptist* in 1823, after the demand for the 4,000 copies of his book on the Walker debate seemed to indicate some readers sympathetic to his views. No savvy editor undertook a monthly journal without misgivings about the risks, but many were begun rashly by "some one who had a mission of some kind, or wanted to enlighten the world." Numbers of paying subscribers remained relatively low among the population as a whole, although many more people read newspapers than paid for them. No more than one in ten people in Massachusetts subscribed to a newspaper, while in Kentucky about 3 percent did so. Readers of the *Christian Baptist* far outnumbered subscribers. Papers collected in communal piles in post offices, passed from neighbor to neighbor, and were read aloud in the workshops and around the family hearth. Campbell claimed to have gained a new reader or subscriber every day after he began publishing his journal.<sup>69</sup>

Like most editors, Campbell was forced to beg subscribers to pay. For the next four decades, the sales of his books and pamphlets, hymnals, and translation of the New Testament helped to finance the monthly publication of his journal. Campbell did not just rely on word-of-mouth to build his subscription list. He hired agents to solicit readers for him. Between 1825 and 1830, Campbell claimed 161 agents scattered through 16 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, and Ireland. Joshua V. Himes, who

68. Before its demise after 10 years of publication in 1818, Smith's paper had 1,400 subscribers and he employed 50 agents. Hatch, 'The Christian Movement and the Search for a Theology of the People,' *Journal of American History* 67 (December 1980): 545-567; Albaugh, *American Religious Periodicals*, xi, xiii; Rusk, *Literature of the Middle Western Frontier*, 131-5, 156; 188-194.

69. Howells, *Recollections of Life in Ohio*, 163; Preface to Volume 7 of the *Christian Baptist*, quoted in Hall, 'Christian Baptist,' 47; Albaugh, *American Religious Periodicals*, xi.

later became the primary editor for the Millerites, peddled Campbell's publications in the 1830s. By 1830, Campbell also counted subscribers in six states where he had no agents—Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Jersey.<sup>70</sup>

Campbell's readers concentrated across the upper South and in states bordering the Ohio River. The most detailed counts of subscribers come from the pages of the journal itself, and custom did not dictate scrupulous accuracy in such matters. But the journal did find an audience. By 1830, Campbell had subscribers in Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. He also had readers in Upper Canada, Vermont, Mississippi, and Missouri. In 1830, Campbell reported \$1,200 in subscriptions, a phenomenal increase from the previous year's \$345.<sup>71</sup> Most of these lived in Kentucky and Virginia, where Campbell himself (and his father Thomas) traveled. Campbell gained recognition in Kentucky because of his 1823 debate in Lexington with William MacCalla, and he engaged in an acrimonious printed dispute with the Virginia Baptist Abner Clopton. The influence of Campbell's publications was enhanced when he accompanied them. In 1824, clergy in Lexington, Kentucky, printed 'an extract from Lawrence Greatrake's defamatory pamphlet, before I reached the town,' Campbell wrote. Although his opponents intended 'to prevent the good people of that vicinity from coming to hear and judge for themselves,' Campbell scoffed that the tactic merely had 'a contrary effect.'<sup>72</sup> The popularity of the *Christian Baptist* in these places underscores the strong connection between print and oratory in the period. Campbell was read most often, it seems, by people who had heard him speak.<sup>73</sup>

70. AC to Selina Campbell, November 4, 1829, and January 8, 1830, in 'letters written by AC during his stay in Richmond, Virginia,' Wrather Papers, DCHS; David T. Arthur, 'Joshua V. Himes and the Cause of Adventism,' in Numbers and Butler, *The Disappointed*, 36–58, esp. 38; Hall, 'Christian Baptist,' Table I, 'Geographical Distribution of the New Agents for the Christian Baptist,' 49.

71. Hall, 'Christian Baptist,' Table 2, 'Source of Monthly Receipts Listed in the Christian Baptist,' 50.

72. *Christian Baptist* 2: 167, quoted in Hall, 'Christian Baptist,' 25.

73. Rusk, *Literature on the Middle Western Frontier*, 204–235.

It is difficult to recover the early history of Campbell's influence through print because of his legendary status among both his contemporaries and historians of the movement. Yet, David Edwin Harrell, the foremost historian of the tradition, argues that religious periodicals have long unified the disparate strands of the Christian denomination, and it is clear that print took on this role from Campbell's era.<sup>74</sup> One early Christian remembered that 'a large proportion of the friends of [Barton] Stone received the teachings of Brother Campbell almost from the very beginning of his writings in the *Christian Baptist*.' There is evidence that Campbell was widely read in the upper South. His newspaper certainly spread his notoriety. In July 1830, some Kentucky Baptists devoted a large section of their printed minutes to thirty-nine paragraphs from Campbell's *Christian Baptist*, refuting each of them one by one. 'That you may know the full extent of our objections, we herewith send you *several articles* gathered from his *Christian Baptist*, and *Millennial Harbinger*, with a reference to the pamphlet and to the page, where you can read and judge, whether *they* are, or are not, the reformation tenets.' In eastern Virginia, where Campbell also had many readers, the journal became particularly notorious. Baptist pastor Abner Clopton reportedly traveled 'through the country with the zeal of a missionary; and with all his learning, and talents, and influence he is opposing the *Christian Baptist*.' By 1830, Georgians regularly read the journals of Barton Stone and Campbell.<sup>75</sup>

Campbell spread his opinions in the *Christian Baptist* by means of a rapidly expanding national postal system. In fact, Campbell himself

74. Harrell, "Restorationism and the Stone-Campbell Tradition," in Charles Lippy and Peter Williams, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1998), 3: 855.

75. Quoted in Harrell, *Quest for a Christian America*, 32 n.22; *Minutes of the Franklin Association of Baptists* [July, 1830] (Frankfort: A. G. Hodges, 1830); *Christian Baptist* VII, 72, quoted in Hall, 'Christian Baptist,' on 13; H. Jackson Darst, *Ante-Bellum Virginia Disciples: An Account of the Emergence and Early Development of the Disciples of Christ in Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia Christian Missionary Society, 1959); J. Edward Moseley, *Disciples of Christ in Georgia* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), 75.

helped to expand it. 'A POST-OFFICE having been established at my residence, it became necessary to change the name of this place [to Bethany] because of a post-town in Mason county called Buffalo,' he announced to his readers in July, 1827. Campbell and other editors produced small works that could be sent through the mails at the lowest possible rate. The *Christian Baptist* was printed in duodecimo (12mo), meaning a single sheet of paper was folded twelve times to produce 24 leaves, or 48 pages. In hand, it was about the size of a modern paperback edition. Small enough to be derided by Campbell's enemies as a 'little pamphlet,' the journal's size was determined by expense of production as well as postage rates. Postage for the *Christian Baptist* was calculated at the rate of 1½ cents per number if sent less than 100 miles in distance and 2½ cents when mailed over 100 miles. Because postage was paid by the recipient rather than the sender in the nineteenth century, postage rates were critical to the health of Campbell's subscription list. His subscribers paid one dollar annually for the publication already; postage alone added as much as 30 cents per year to the price. Campbell's concern was evident in a letter he wrote in 1827 to the Postmaster General to clarify postage rates for his paper.<sup>76</sup>

Campbell not only mailed copies of his journal, he also received letters from his readers. They wrote query after query. 'Do give me a short explanation of a part of the epistle to the Romans; beginning at the 28th verse of the 8th chapter and ending at the 11th chapter,' a reader wrote in 1824. Campbell received so many questions that he was compelled to plead for mercy. 'I have found it utterly impossible to answer, in any formal way, either privately or publicly, the whole amount of sentimental letters which I have for the last six months received,' he announced in 1829, before setting out five rules regarding future correspondence.<sup>77</sup> Readers

76. 'TO POSTMASTERS,' *Christian Messenger* (Georgetown, Ky.) November 1827, 24. Campbell's *Christian Baptist* was the same size as Barton Stone's *Christian Messenger*, which debuted in November 1826.

77. *Christian Baptist*, 2: 206 and 6: 70, quoted in Hall, 'Christian Baptist,' 41, 44.

gave Campbell the editor a pastoral and teaching authority. In this, Campbell appropriated an authority similar to that of a bishop, setting a precedent for other editors in the Christian movement.<sup>78</sup> Editors sometimes challenged the authority of local pastors as they had to compete with the printed page for attention. It was easy enough on a stormy Sunday morning to forego a long wet ride to church in favor of reading Campbell's newspaper by the fireside.

The Postal Act of 1792 privileged the mailing of the newspapers that lawmakers believed were indispensable to the health of the republic. Newspapers were charged minimal postage and editors enjoyed the free delivery of papers for exchange with other editors. In 1800, 1.9 million newspapers were sent through the mails; by 1820 that increased to 6 million, and by 1830, to 16 million. These numbers represented probably not more than 10 percent of the total number of newspapers printed, but the mails were especially important to rural editors like Campbell. Richard John has estimated that the postal system transported 65 percent of all rural newspapers, and the percentage was probably higher in the South and West. Newspapers were far more common at rural post offices than letters, which were comparatively costly to send. As a result of the free exchanges between editors, the columns of country papers filled with news from New York, Philadelphia, and London in an era before newspapers hired staff to gather news. The free exchange of papers was significant enough to break the lock on national print by eastern cities that many eighteenth-century Americans had assumed would continue.<sup>79</sup>

The Postal Act was intended to benefit the political press, but the law ignored content in favor of regulation by size, so its benefits extended to religious journals. Campbell carried on a wide exchange of newspapers with political and religious editors across

78. Harrell, 'Restorationism and the Stone-Campbell Tradition,' 852.

79. *Christian Baptist*, Vol. 4, No. 12, p. 346; Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 31-39, 154-56.

the country, but he quarreled in print most frequently with editors of religious journals in his own region. He printed correspondence from the *Columbian Star* [Baptist General Convention for Foreign Missions, Washington, D.C.], the *Baptist Recorder* [Bloomfield, Ky.], *Wooster [Ohio] Spectator*, *Pittsburgh Recorder* [Presbyterian], and the *Western Luminary* [interdenominational, Lexington, Ky.]. Nor were his rivals reticent in their replies. The editor of the *Columbian Star* called Campbell insolent, arrogant, pugnacious, and insidious. 'Alexander Campbell is an enemy of the truth as it is in Jesus,' Rev. J.B. Breckinridge charged in the *Western Luminary* in 1826. Campbell was accused of heresy, of being a drunk, a horse thief, and most outrageously, a Deist. Print was regarded as dangerous as well as edifying; some pastors warned congregations to keep Campbell's publications away from their children. Campbell's reputation for making enemies was extraordinary enough to suggest to some they could make money by encouraging it. Word traveled in the region of 'a man of about 50, fair complexion, impudent in his manners, given to intoxication, extremely solicitous for food for himself and his horse,' who was 'always railing against the tenets and proceedings of Alexander Campbell, and very urgent in soliciting collections.'<sup>80</sup>

The charge that Campbell seemed most eager to refute, perhaps because it hit closest to the mark, was that of avarice. His opponents charged that he printed the *Christian Baptist* and his other books and pamphlets solely for profit. The *Christian Baptist* probably did not make the profits his enemies charged, but it sold well enough.<sup>81</sup> Campbell was an able businessman with a large family to support, and between his farm, his school teaching, and his print shop, he managed to thrive. He reported that he received \$1,487 in gross receipts for his newspaper in 1830,

80. Hall, 'Christian Baptist,' 20-24; Wrather, 'AC,' 559.

81. Campbell quoted a note purportedly from Sala in his pamphlet 'Lawrence Greatrake'. 'Although I was entitled, by agreement, to the half of the profits accruing from everything published in this office, I greatly preferred, not long since, to sell . . . the risques are too great, and the profits too small,' Sala wrote.



while his opponents charged that he made a clear profit on the work of \$2,500.<sup>82</sup>

Campbell was first forced to defend himself in print on this account in 1825 when a writer who took the name of Lawrence Greatrake charged him with having an unseemly 'pecuniary interest' in the sale of his debates and his journal. In a characteristically contentious and long-winded reply, Campbell dismissed Greatrake's figures on the 'costs of publishing, and the profits accruing from the sale of so many books' as completely false. Campbell claimed to own only one-fourth of the last edition of the debates and only half-interest in the *Christian Baptist* (he was still co-proprietor with Sala). Even if he did own as much as he was charged, Campbell claimed he had made at most \$150 per year from his labors as a pastor. Moreover, he argued, for Greatrake to make his charge stick, he would have to accuse 'almost all the editors of the religious books, magazines, and papers of the age.' Finally, Campbell threw down the gauntlet by offering to sell his 'interest in the 1st volume of the *Christian Baptist* and the whole of my interest in this enriching Debate, for the first cost . . . Let this offer now be accepted, or let us hear no more of my avarice,' he crowed.<sup>83</sup>

In fact, Campbell did not imagine his *Christian Baptist* as a genuinely commercial venture. He sold no advertising and did not print general news. He himself wrote most of what appeared in his columns. As such, his journal was part of what David Nord has called the 'evangelical mass media' of the early nineteenth century, which put the missionary impulse at the foundation of the popularization of print. The impulse to get evangelical Protestant literature and Bibles into every American home drove evangelical innovation in both printing technologies and distribution. The American Bible Society, founded in 1816, printed more than one million Bibles in the three years ending in 1831, and in the

82. Hall, 'Christian Baptist,' 47.

83. AC, 'Lawrence Greatrake,' 17-24.

preceding decade was able to cut the production costs of its Bibles in half with the use of the new technique of stereotyping. Profits, then, did not drive the creation of this kind of mass media; nearly all of these materials were given away or sold very cheaply.<sup>84</sup>

The dispute over the profitability of Campbell's publishing underscores the uneasy relationship even by 1830 between pastors and the print market. This debate coincided with wider concerns about what preachers should be paid, as a huge gap began to open between the salaries of pastors in city pulpits and those in the countryside, and critics charged that high city salaries were a sign of pastors' greed. Protestant publishers both embraced the market and shunned it, as David Nord has shown. 'By the late 1820s, the evangelical publishers had become leading innovators of printing technology and national business organization, and the millennial dream of reaching everything with books and tracts seemed imminent,' he writes. 'On the other hand, they viewed the market as their most wily and dangerous foe.' Consequently, the great Bible and tract societies did their work for charity, not for profit.<sup>85</sup>

Those independent of national societies, such as Alexander Campbell, found the work of printing itself, quite apart from the content of their journals, to be a source of controversy. Some editors apparently tried to avoid the appearance of unseemly profits by pledging that they would donate monies made to 'Missionary and other benevolent institutions,' but Campbell scoffed that few actually did this. But in an era when evangelicals embraced the necessity of printing, and in some cases, the desirability of printing for profit, Campbell remained vulnerable because of his independence. He refused to ally himself with an established denomination and shunned the work of benevolent societies. He was doubly vulnerable to his critics because he himself had railed

84. David Paul Nord, 'The Evangelical Origins of Mass Media in America, 1815-1835,' *Journalism Monographs* 88 (1984): 1-31.

85. Nord, *Faith in Reading*, 6-7.

against a hireling clergy more interested in money than religious truth, and his enemies turned his own attacks against him.

His independence only endeared him to his loyal readers. In sharp contrast to the national benevolent societies, which assumed a broad Protestant unity of doctrine and purpose, Campbell cultivated readers who celebrated his refusal to compromise and approved of the rank insults he rained upon his enemies. He favored an edgy Christian republicanism, envisioning himself as an independent yeoman for Christ who was not beholden to either the eastern-led national societies or denominational interests. Campbell's readers cared little for the bland moral pieties of the American Sunday School Union. They wanted a champion of religious truth who would take up the slingshot and slay the Goliath of the Protestant establishment. 'I have been a subscriber of the *Christian Baptist* and an attentive reader for two years,' a reader from Effingham County, Georgia wrote. 'It is with pleasure that I do acknowledge it has been of more service to me in enlightening my mind in the scriptures than any publication I ever read before.' Campbell's insistence that printing the truth would make him unpopular was ingenious. He boasted that the printed argument with Lawrence Greatrake alone gained 200 subscribers to the *Christian Baptist*.<sup>86</sup>

As a self-made Ulster man who never failed to invoke his Glasgow education, Campbell embodied a contentious gentility that endeared him to his readers in the early Republic. His writings had a raw edge, and this populist, adversarial rhetoric found an audience among readers who reveled in the entertaining controversy of political and religious debates. Campbell gleefully printed insults from his enemies, cannily trading on a reputation as one who entertained all sides of a question in a new republic drunk on the democratic possibilities of print. 'Your paper is, I fear, a disorganizer, and I doubt it will prove deistical in the end.

86. *Christian Baptist* 6: 82-83, quoted in Hall, 'Christian Baptist,' 29-30.

The clergy tell us we ought not to read it, it is dangerous to our children and is only fit for the fire,' an early reader of the *Christian Baptist* concluded. The vein of contentious readers that Campbell tapped was never a majority of Americans, or even of Protestants. Distrustful of the monied classes of the eastern cities and plantations (and their clergy), Campbell positioned himself perfectly to reach those in the upper Ohio River valley and highlands of the upper South. He postured as a republican yeoman, claiming that he had refused offers of 'places of public and conspicuous eminence' in New York and Philadelphia to take his 'Bible and the plough and sit down among the hills of Western Virginia.' His rhetoric resonated perfectly with the spirit of the age in the trans-Allegheny region.<sup>87</sup>

*Conclusion: Sectarianism and Print in the Early Republic*

'No man probably in America has as much in his power as you. The eyes of thousands are upon you.' Campbell happily printed this reader's judgment in 1830, just before he closed publication of the *Christian Baptist* to continue the work in the *Millennial Harbinger*. The writer assumed something that many of Campbell's readers, and the man himself, believed: printing accorded power in the early Republic. The perception was tangible enough to win Campbell a seat at the state constitutional convention in 1829. An outspoken defender of western rights, Campbell was initially awed to be in the presence of men such as Madison and Monroe at the gathering in Richmond. But he warmed to the challenge when he realized that his reputation preceded him. 'I do not know that I have ever seen so many great men assembled together before,' Campbell wrote to his wife Selina from Richmond in November 1829. 'They all know me from the East and West and they all watch my movements with a jealous eye. I hope to profit in many respects from this meeting. It will give me a new

87. AC quoted in Wrather, "Alexander Campbell," 412.

kind of Education and introduce me to a new acquaintance both of which will be profitable to me and I hope to some of them.' Campbell preached to crowds of several thousand in Richmond and Petersburg, officiated at weddings, and sold copies of his debate with Robert Owen, held in Cincinnati in the previous April, which Campbell had rushed into print so he might sell copies in Richmond. 'They all' knew Campbell because they knew of his publications, although it is unlikely he was widely read in Richmond. Then, as now, a writer's reputation could be based on whether one was published, not whether one was read.<sup>88</sup>

The voters who sent Campbell to Richmond in 1829 apparently considered him persuasive in matters political just as readers of his publications considered him persuasive in matters religious. Both were willing to accord Campbell authority. In the 1820s, an editor could wield both political and religious authority even in Virginia, the state that had created the tradition of the separation of church and state in the United States. Yet neither voters nor readers of Campbell's journal seemed concerned to distinguish between the two. The writer who congratulated Campbell mentioned only that he had power, failing to specify what kind.

The commonplace that print accorded power to men like Campbell in the early Republic begs two questions. First, what kind of power? And second, the power to do what? Did the power of a sectarian editor such as Campbell differ in kind from that of a man like Joseph Gale, the influential editor of the *National Intelligencer* and *Raleigh Register*? In fact, Campbell perfected a Christian republican rhetoric that could both oppose infant baptism and

88. *Christian Baptist*, 7: 245, quoted in Hall, 'Christian Baptist,' 64; copy of AC to Selina Campbell, 4 November 1829, in 'letters written by AC during his stay in Richmond, Virginia,' Wrather Papers, DCHS. See also AC, 'Address to the Citizens of Monongalia County, Virginia,' 29 May 1829, copy of broadside [probably printed in Campbell's shop] in Wrather Papers, DCHS; *Journal, Acts and Proceedings, of a General Convention of the Commonwealth of Virginia* (Richmond: Thomas Ritchie, 1829), esp. 116-24; William M. Moorhouse, 'Alexander Campbell and the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-1830,' *Virginia Cavalcade* 24 (Spring, 1975): 184-91; Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., *The Rhetoric of Conservatism: The Virginia Convention of 1829-30 and the Conservative Tradition in the South* (San Marino, Ca.: Huntington Library, 1982), 53-56.

defend the extension of the franchise. The connection between these two seemingly disparate issues was human freedom. When Campbell declared that the work of his generation, 'the emancipation of the human mind from the shackles of superstition . . . to liberate the minds of men from sectarian tyrannies,' was a 'revolution, [that] taken in all its influences, will make men free indeed,' he demonstrated that he was a brilliant practitioner of the Christian republicanism that Mark A. Noll has shown characterized his age.<sup>89</sup>

The rhetorical tradition that Campbell mastered—and that has survived him—refused the sedate pieties of national benevolent societies such as the American Tract Society and American Bible Society. These used print to create a broad Protestant language of consensus. By contrast, Campbell earned a reputation as a 'dangerous man' among the largely Yankee 'Presbygationalists' who headed these national societies. Insults flew on the pages of the *Christian Baptist*, truth was defended, and lines were drawn. Campbell refused to yield any sectarian ground to a vision of national Protestant unity. In spite of their disagreements, Protestants all met on the same field in the early nineteenth century, a place where the authority of editors and the power of persuasion in a nation of growing numbers of readers and a burgeoning periodical press were assumed. The community that gathered around Campbell's printed voice was never primarily local. From his small shop in Buffaloe, he gained a regional audience, one concentrated along the Ohio valley and across the Upper South. He shunned the influential cities of the eastern seaboard to remain in his isolated valley west of Pittsburgh. But this positioned him perfectly as the American center of population moved west. When Campbell died in 1866, readers around the nation knew the address of the small hamlet of Bethany, Virginia.

89. AC, 'Fourth of July Oration, 1830,' quoted in Lester G. McAllister, ed., *An Alexander Campbell Reader* (St. Louis, Mo.: CBP Press, 1988), 63; Noll, *America's God*, 73–92.

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