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# Christian Restoration

## Part 3: Early Attempts at Restoring

As Narrated by Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

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If Roger Williams was willing to wait for a restoration, Thomas Campbell wanted to cause one. A Scottish Presbyterian minister who migrated to the United States in 1807, Thomas disagreed with Presbyterian teachings that led to a split between him and that church. He published a tract in 1809 titled *Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington*.

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> parts of his tract included:

4: That this society by no means considers itself a church... nor do the members, as such, consider themselves as standing connected in that relation... but merely as voluntary advocates for church reformation; and, as possessing the powers common to all individuals, who may please to associate in a peaceable and orderly manner...

5: That this society, formed for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity, shall... [not] inculcate any thing of human authority, of private opinion, or inventions of men, as having any place in the constitution, faith, or worship, of the Christian church—or, any thing, as matter of Christian faith, or duty, for which there cannot be expressly produced a thus saith the Lord either in express terms, or by approved precedent.

Thomas Campbell hoped to recover apostolic Christianity and regarded all of the Historic Christian Creeds, starting with the Nicene Creed, as unnecessary and divisive. He thought the Bible was clear enough to render Creeds unnecessary.

Campbell's motto was: "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak, where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

This view was a direct affront to Historic Christianity because all denominations, Catholic and Protestant, accepted the creeds. Rejection of the

creeds was rejection of Historic Christianity itself. Therefore, Thomas Campbell was a heretic.

Alexander, the son of Thomas Campbell, followed his father into the Presbyterian ministry. He also became disillusioned with Presbyterian inadequacies and pettiness and left Scotland for America.

By the time father and son were reunited, they both had rejected traditional Historic Christianity and welcomed restoring the Primitive Christianity of the New Testament.

Alexander observed concerning the Christian Creeds, "It requires but little reflection to discover that the fiercest disputes about religion, are about what the Bible does not say, rather than about what it does say."

The Campbells organized congregational churches that were locally governed by the congregation itself. They claimed to be merely "Christians" but their followers were nicknamed "Campbellites." Their movement is now referred to as "the Church of Christ," or "the Disciples of Christ," or "the Disciples."

Campbells hoped to recover the original by subtracting errors. Their calculation was that by eliminating every superfluous thing, what remained would be the original. These mathematics could not, however, recover anything lost. For that things necessarily had to be added. And adding could only come from God.