

# The Tri-lemma;

OR,

DEATH BY THREE HORNS

BY J. R. GRAVES

CHAPTER V.

THE CLAIMS OF BAPTISTS

Baptists claim that they are successors to the "Witnesses of Jesus," who preserved the faith once delivered to the saints, and kept the ordinances as they were originally committed to the primitive Churches. They claim to be the lineal descendants of the martyrs who, for so many ages, sealed their testimony with their blood. They claim that they can trace the history of communities, essentially like themselves, back through the "wilderness," into which they were driven by the dragon, and the beast that succeeded to him, and the image of the beast, by a trail of blood, lighted up by a thousand stake-fires, until the blood mingles with the blood of the apostles, and the Son of God, and John the Baptist. They believe that they never did, ecclesiastically, symbolize with the Papacy, but ever repudiated it as Antichrist, and withdrew from it, and refused to recognize its priests as the ministers of Christ. These are bold claims, we admit; yet if we can sustain them successfully against those of any other communion, it is not only our *right*, but our imperative *duty* to do so.

I propose to do so, not by Baptist testimony, but by the united and concurrent testimony of Protestants and Papists.

It would be conceded by any judge or jury that my case was an incontestable one, should I sustain it, beyond a doubt, *by the witnesses of my opponent!*

1. *It has been charged that American Baptists sprang from Roger Williams, and their Baptisms from his informal and unscriptural one.*

The facts are, that Roger Williams never was a *member*, much less a *minister*, of any Baptist Church in England or America. He was converted to, and advocated, their views of baptism and civil and religious liberty. It is true that he immersed Ezekiel Holliman, who, in turn, baptized him; and he again, ten or eleven others; and so formed a society; but he continued with it only four months, when he

repudiated what he had done, and his society soon came to nothing. Cotton Mather, the contemporary of Williams, a distinguished Pedobaptist Puritan minister, (see Mather's History,) said it soon came to nothing.

It can not be shown that any Baptist Church sprang from Williams's affair.

Nor can it be proved that the baptism of any Baptist minister came from Williams's hands.

The oldest Baptist Church in America is the one now existing, with her original articles of faith, in Newport, R. I., and she was planted by Dr. John Clark before Williams was baptized. He received his baptism in Elder Stillwell's Church in London, and that Church received hers from the Dutch Baptists of Holland, sending over a minister to be baptized by them. These Baptists descended from the Waldenses, whose historical line reaches far back and connects with the Donatists, and theirs to the Apostolic Churches.

A writer in the *Christian Review* condenses the facts of history into the following eleven statements, which can be confidently relied upon:

"1. Roger Williams was baptized by Ezekiel Holliman, March, 1639, and immediately after, he baptized Mr. Holliman and ten others.

"2. These formed a Church, or Society of which Roger Williams was the pastor.

"3. Four months after his baptism, that is, in July following, W. left the Church, and never afterward returned to it. As his doubts respecting baptism and the perpetuity of the Church, which led to this step, must have commenced soon after his baptism, it is not likely that he baptized any others.

"4. The Church which Williams formed, 'came to nothing,' or was dissolved soon after he left it.

"5. It was reorganized, or another was formed a few days afterward, under Mr. Thomas Olney as its pastor, who was one of the eleven baptized by Roger Williams. Olney continued to be the pastor of this Church until his death, in 1682, somewhat over 30 years.

"6. In 1653 or '54, which was a few years after the formation of Olney's Church, there was a division in that Church on the question of "laying on of hands" in the reception of members, and a separate Church was formed for the maintenance of this ceremony, under the pastorship of Chad Browne, Wickenden, and Dexter.

This Church was perpetuated, having, in 1808, given up its original faith as to the laying on of hands, and is now the First Baptist Church in Providence.

"7. The parent Church, under Olney, gradually dwindled away, and became extinct about the year 1718, some seventy years from its origin.

"8. No Church was formed from Olney's after the division already mentioned, and no ministers are known to have gone out from it. Olney's baptism, whether valid or invalid, was not propagated.

"9. Nearly a century passed before the Church formed from Olney's began to colonize, in 1730.

"10. None of its ministers, or the ministers of the Churches formed from it, received their baptism from Williams, or from any one whose baptisms descended from his.

"11. The Baptist Churches of America, then, could not have descended from Roger Williams, or from the temporary society which he formed. Their true descent is from the Baptist Churches of Wales and Piedmont, extending back to the apostles' times."

*2. It has been charged that Baptists are the descendants of the fanatical Anabaptists of Munster.*

But few now are so reckless as to make this charge, since it has been so clearly refuted by Baptists and admitted by so many candid Pedobaptist scholars. Only a certain class of Pedobaptists, *the basest sort* of their ministry, propagate this slander now. Merle D'Aubigne', a Presbyterian, and the distinguished author of the History of the Reformation, who had a perfect acquaintance with all the facts, and wrote upon the very ground, in the preface to his work published by the American Tract Society, says:

"On one point, it seems necessary to guard against misapprehension. Some persons imagine that the Anabaptists of the times of the Reformation and the Baptists of our day, are the same. But they are as different as possible."

Fessenden's *Encyclopedia* (quoted with approbation by D'Aubigne' says:

"ANABAPTIST. – The English and Dutch Baptists do not consider the word as at all applicable to their sect. It is but justice to observe that the Baptists of Holland, England, and the United States, are essentially distinct from those seditious and

fanatical individuals above mentioned; as they profess an equal aversion to all principles of rebellion of the one, and enthusiasm of the other." – *Preface to Reformation, p. 10.*

The fact is, the Munster Anabaptists were many of them *sprinklers*, who were dissidents from Rome but not converts to the Lutheran or Genevan creeds, and therefore, equally obnoxious to the displeasure of Luther and Calvin. A writer has well said:

"Under the very *generic* name of Anabaptist, the greatest imaginable variety of characters passed—that some were 'sober and virtuous persons,' while that many others were mere 'political speculators and adventurers.'"

Now it is an act of the greatest injustice to call all these Baptists. Are we to be stigmatized for the doings of *sprinklers*? or to be blamed with the faults of infant baptizers? or to be held accountable for the misdemeanors of "mere political speculators and adventurers?" We never acknowledged any such thing in our Zion. They were *anti*-Baptists. Those Anabaptists who were of "the genuine Baptist order," disclaimed all connections with the political religious mass. We must separate between those who were truly and properly Baptists, or as their enemies term them, *Anabaptists*, and all that impure and gross religious material, which is received as theirs by unfair and designing Pedobaptist historians. The Reformation deluged the Baptist Zion with hundreds and thousands who were scarcely cleansed from the polluting embraces of the mother of harlots. They were dragged from the cloisters, and convents, and confessionals of mystical Babylon by the magic names of Luther and Calvin; but they were only half awakened. Their notions were crude and ill digested, and ready to be guided by any and every master spirit, and if, forsooth, they did not in every particular, subscribe the *Lutheran* or *Zwinglian* creeds, whether or Church or State, they were straightway styled Anabaptists. Hence, we find almost all kinds of persons bearing this title. But a "portion of them were of the genuine Baptist order;" this was a little nucleus of *true saints*, around whose Zion both Protestants and Catholics "heaped their cast-off rubbish, as if the more easily to consume it with their fiery persecutions." But the genuine Anabaptists existed to repudiate the very first appearance and workings of the "Man of Sin." Before Luther protested, or the Papacy was, they are. They existed as a distinct people ages before these Protestant daughters of Rome were born. They were the only "salt of the earth," and the "light of the world," during the sixteen hundred years that preceded the Reformation. The Baptists alone supplied that host of Martyrs, whose souls John saw under the

throne, impatient for their names and testimony to be vindicated by the coming of the Son of God.

I bring forward here Mosheim, one of their bitterest enemies, a distinguished *Lutheran* historian, whose work is universally a standard. He so hated the faith of the Baptists, as to stigmatize it as "*a flagitious and intolerable heresy.*" Yet this historian, while he could trace each existing Protestant and Papist sect back to the very *day* of its birth, and to the *spot* of its origin, and give the name of its *father and founder*, and give us every *year* of its history—showing that no *wilderness-like obscurity*, no hiding, could be predicated of them—yet he was forced to admit that the origin of the Baptists was of no modern date, but *hidden in the remote depths of antiquity*:

"The true origin of the sect which acquired the name of Anabaptists' by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion, and derived that of Mennonites from that famous man to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, IS HID IN THE REMOTE DEPTHS OF ANTIQUITY, and is, consequently, extremely difficult to be ascertained." – *Vol. iv. Pp. 427,8, Maclaine's Edition of 1811.*

Again:

"It may be observed that the Mennonites are not entirely mistaken when they boast of their descent from the Waldenses, Petrobrussians, and other *ancient sects*, who were usually considered as witnesses of the truth, in the times of universal darkness and superstition. Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay, *concealed* [this looks like a fulfillment of the Revelation, where we find the woman driven into the wilderness—i. e., obscurity!] in almost all the countries of Europe. Particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland, and Germany, many persons who adhered tenaciously to the following doctrines, which the Waldenses, Wicliffites and Hussites, [we do not feel reproached by association with such spirits,] had maintained, some in a more disguised, and others in a more public manner, viz.: 'That the kingdom of Christ, or the visible Church he had established upon earth, was an assembly of true and real saints, and ought, therefore, to be inaccessible to the wicked and unrighteous, and also exempt from all those institutions which human prudence suggests, to oppose the progress of iniquity, or to correct and reform transgressors.'"

This is a frank admission that the Waldenses, as well as the Wickliffites, were opposed to infant baptism and Church membership, since they admitted none by

"*real saints*," into the visible Church, and that they—as Baptists have ever been—were opposed to a religion of *force and persecution*.

We would be willing to rest the claims of Baptists to the highest antiquity, and to Scriptural orthodoxy, upon this testimony alone.

Now, let a Presbyterian testify concerning the antiquity of Baptists. We ask Zwingle, the celebrated Swiss reformer, who was contemporary with Luther, Munzer, and Stork:

"The institution of Anabaptism is no novelty, but for thirteen hundred years has caused great disturbance in the Church, and has acquired such a strength, that the attempt in this age to contend with it, appeared futile for a time."

This carries our history back to A. D. 225! Zwingle may well say that Anabaptism has acquired great strength in his day.

In the little State of Bohemia alone, Baptists numbered eighty thousand.

One of the Waldensian bards, George Morell, stated that in his day, 1533, there were more than eight hundred thousand persons professing the faith of the Waldenses. <sup>[1]</sup>

Lemborch, professor of divinity in the University of Amsterdam, and who wrote a history of the Inquisition, in comparing the Waldenses with the Christians of his own times, says:

"To speak honestly what I think of all the modern sects of Christians, the Dutch Baptists most resemble both the Albigenses and Waldenses, but particularly the latter." <sup>[2]</sup>

But, have we not been persecuted and worn down for, lo! These twelve hundred years? Has not the Apocalyptic "WOMAN," during all this time, been drunk with our blood, and heaven filling with our martyred brethren?

We appeal to Cardinal Hosius, President of the Council of Trent, (A. D. 1650,) the most learned and powerful Catholic of his day. Hear him testify:

"If the truth of religion were to be judged of by the readiness and cheerfulness which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be *truer* and *surer* than that of Anabaptists [Baptists,] since there have been *none, for these twelve hundred years past, that have been more generally punished*, or that have more cheerfully and steadfastly undergone, and even

offered themselves to, the most *cruel sorts* of punishment, than these people."

"The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect, of which kind the Waldensian brethren seem also to have been. Nor is this heresy a modern thing, for it existed in the time of Austin."—*Ree's Reply to Wall, p 20.*

Austin was born A. D. 354. This gives Baptists a high antiquity; and the fact that Austin was not baptized in infancy, and yet was born of Christian parents, proves that Pedobaptism was not in existence, or, at least, not very general, in this century. That infant baptism was a new thing in this early age, is proved by the additional facts that neither Basil, Bishop of Nicene, nor Chrysostom, nor Jerome of Strydon, nor Theodore, the Emperor, nor Gregory Nazienzen, nor Ambrose, nor Polycrates nor Nectaries, nor Constantine the Great, were baptized in infancy, though born of Christian parents. [3]

We add the following from Orchard, vol. i. p. 49:

"Dr. Field observes, on the histories of these great men, [4] 'that very many that are born of Christian parents, in the fourth and fifth centuries, delayed their baptism for a long time, insomuch that many were made bishops before they were baptized.' The same views are supported by Beatus Rhenanus, and Mr. Den; the latter mentions Pancratius, Pontius, Nazarius, Tecla, Luigerus, Erasma Tusca, all offsprings of believers, and yet not baptized until aged. Similar observations are made by the learned Daille and Dr. Barlow. [5]

"The great champion for infant baptism, Dr. W. Wall, remarks: 'It seems to me that the instances which the Baptists give of persons not baptized in infancy, though born of Christian parents, are not, if the matter of fact be true, so inconsiderable as this last plea [the sayings of the Fathers] would represent. On the contrary, *the persons they mention are SO MANY, and SUCH NOTED PERSONS,* that, if they be allowed, it is an argument that leaving children unbaptized was no unusual, but a frequent and ordinary thing; for, it is obvious to conclude, that if we can, in so remote an age, trace the practice of *so many* that did this, it is probable that a *great many more* of whose birth and baptism we do not read *did the like.* This I will own, that it seems to me the argument of the greatest weight of any that is brought on the Baptist side in this dispute about antiquity.'" [6]

We conclude this chapter with the words of Curcelleus:

"Pedobaptism was not known in the world the two first ages after Christ; in the third and fourth it was approved by *few*, at length in the fifth and following ages, it

began to obtain in divers places; and therefore, we (Pedobaptists) observe this rite, indeed, as an ancient custom, but not as an apostolic tradition. The custom of baptizing infants did not begin before the third age after Christ, and that there appears not the least footstep of it for the first two centuries." [7]

But we have yet the crowning testimony of two Pedobaptist historians, that should convince the most incredulous of our candid opponents.

In the year 1819, Dr. Ypeij, Professor of the University of Gunningen, and Dr. J. J. Dermout, chaplain to the King of Holland, distinguished Pedobaptist scholars, published a history, in four volumes, entitled, "*History of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands*"—of which Church they were members—in which work they devote a chapter to the history of the Dutch Baptists. I have space for only the frank statement of the conclusion to which their impartial investigation led them:

"We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and who have long, in the history of the Church, received the honor of that origin. ON THIS ACCOUNT, THE BAPTISTS MAY BE CONSIDERED THE ONLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WHICH HAS STOOD SINCE THE APOSTLES, AND AS A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY WHICH HAS PRESERVED PURE THE DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH ALL AGES. The perfectly correct external economy of the Baptist denomination, tends to confirm the truth disputed by the Romish Church, that the Reformation brought about in the sixteenth century was in the highest degree necessary; and at the same time goes to refute the erroneous notions of the Catholics, that their communion is the most ancient."—See *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Art. MENNONITES. also, the *Southern Baptist Review*, Vol. v, No. 1, Art. 1, for full translation of the chapter.

That Dermout and Ypeij are not unsupported by historical authority, in their statements respecting the difference between the Anabaptists and the Baptists, will appear from an article in "The New Royal Encyclopedia." This great work, by Wm. H. Hall, Esq., with other learned, ingenious gentlemen, was begun in London in 1788, and completed in three large folio, volumes. In the article "Anabaptists," after recounting the excesses of Muntzer, Matthias, Borkholdt, and others, during the sixteenth century, in Germany, the Encyclopedia proceeds:

"It is to be remarked that the Baptists or Mennonites in England and Holland are to be considered in a very different light from the enthusiasts we have been describing, and it appears equally uncandid and invidious to trace up their distinguished sentiments, as some of their adversaries have done, to those

obnoxious characters, and then to stop, in order, as it were, to associate with the ideas of turbulence and fanaticism, with which it certainly has no natural connection. Their coincidence with some of those oppressed and infatuated people in denying baptism to infants, is acknowledged by the Baptists, but they disavow the practice which the appellation of Anabaptists implies; and their doctrines seem referable to a more ancient and respectable origin. They appear supported by history in considering themselves the descendants of the Waldenses, who were so grievously oppressed and persecuted by the despotic heads of the Romish hierarchy."

We have thus indicated, but by no means exhausted, our sources of proof, in establishing the claims of the Baptist denomination to be the community established by Christ as his visible Church. The Welsh Baptists trace their unbroken descent from apostolic times; and from Wales came many of our earliest Churches in America. [8]

Baptists not only can lay a just claim to the highest antiquity of any acknowledged Christian community, but to them, belongs the distinguishing honor of having been the first, and for nearly eighteen centuries the only, assertors of civil and religious liberty. In whatever land the inestimable right is today enjoyed, it was planted there by Baptist hands, and watered by Baptist blood. Not only against the Popes of Rome, but against the Reformers, Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin, did the Baptists maintain this doctrine.

Not to Luther, or his Church, does the world attribute the principle, that the conscience of no one should be constrained or coerced in religious matters, for, as an oppose and persecutor of the Anabaptists, he had no equal in his day—stirring the princes of Germany to annihilate them for their dominions, as he did by his letters, and prodigious numbers were devoted to death in its most dreadful forms. [9]

Not to Zwingle, the Swiss Presbyterian, who instigated the cantons of Switzerland to pass such murderous laws, which devoted to cruel death so many Baptist men and women; not to Zwingle, who pronounced the death sentence, and its form, upon the noble Hubmeyer, "his old friend, the companion of his earlier studies," who, in sacred relations of friend and fellow-student, had known his doubts on baptism, and had himself felt their force. This man, the father of Swiss Presbyterianism, "is reported by Brunt" to have pronounced the Anabaptist's sentence in the few words scarcely less impious than unfeeling: "*Qui iterum mergit, mergatur.*"

Not to Calvin does the world owe the idea or the practice of *religious liberty*, or even *toleration*; for "he instigated the persecuting laws of Geneva, and he it was who arrested, condemned, and roasted, in a *slow fire of green wood*, the martyr SERVETUS."

Mosheim, a Lutheran himself, confesses "there were certain sects and doctors, against whom the zeal, vigilance, and severity of Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists were united. *The objects of their common aversion were the Anabaptists.*" And it has been so from that day to the present.

The sentiments of the Baptists, which were then so disliked by statesmen, clergy, Protestants and Papists, and for which Baptists are today everywhere persecuted and oppressed by Protestants and Papists, are this stated by Orchard:

"We have recorded that the Baptists were the common objects of aversion to Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists, whose united zeal was directed to their destruction. So deeply were these prejudices interwoven with the State party, that the knights on oath were to declare their abhorrence of Anabaptism. The sentiments of these people, and which were so disliked by statesmen, clergy, and reformers, may be stated under five views, via.: 'A love of civil liberty in opposition to magisterial dominion; and affirmation of the sufficiency and simplicity of revelation, in opposition to scholastic theology; a zeal for self-government, in opposition to clerical authority; a requisition of the reasonable service of a personal profession of Christianity rising out of man's own convictions, in opposition to the practice of force on infants—the whole of which they deem superstition or enthusiasm; and the indispensable necessity of virtue in every individual member of a Christian Church, in distinction from all speculative creeds, all rites and ceremonies, and parochial divisions. These views, to the statesman, were adverse to his line of policy with his peasants; to the clergy they were offensive, since it placed every man on a level with the priesthood, and sanctioned one to instruct another; to the Reformers they were objectionable, since they broke the national tie, and allowed all persons equal liberty to think, choose, and act in the affairs of the soul: thus these sentiments were the aversion of all. An edict issued by Frederick, at a later period, shows how unpalatable these views were. His majesty expressed his astonishment at the number of Anabaptists, and his horror at the principal error which they embraced, which was, that, according to the express declaration of the Holy Scriptures, (1 Cor. Vii:23,) they were to submit to no human authority. He adds that his conscience compelled him to proscribe them, and accordingly he banished them from his dominions on pain of death."

We claim that Baptists were the first assertors of the principle of religious liberty in England. Mr. Williams, in speaking of these times of Cromwell, and the events of that period, says:

“The share which the Baptists took in shoring up the fallen liberties of England, and in infusing new vigor and liberality into the constitution of that country, is not generally known. Yet to this body, English liberty owes a debt it can never acknowledge. Among the Baptists, Christian freedom found its earliest, its stanchest, [sic] its most consistent, and its most disinterested champions.”

We maintain, what authentic and received history so abundantly affirms, that Baptists were the first assertors of religious liberty in New England or on the American Continent. The first blood shed on these shores for religious liberty was Baptist blood, and it followed the excoriating lash, driven by Pedobaptist hands, by the order of a Pedobaptist court, under the direction of a Protestant State Church in New England. The last persons imprisoned in America for preaching the Gospel were Baptists. We maintain that Baptists, singly and alone, and in face of the bitter opposition of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists, severed the Church and State in Virginia, and abolished all laws oppressive to the conscience, and thus secured in the Old Dominion the triumph of civil and religious liberty. We maintain that America is indebted solely to Baptists, first, for the *idea* of a pure Democratic form of civil government, and then for having prepared the popular mind by the molding influence of their principles to receive such a government, as well as for its present strength and sole hope of its perpetuity.

The following facts were communicated to the *Christian Watchman*, several years ago, by the Rev. Dr. Fishback, of Lexington, Ky.:

“MR. EDITOR: The following circumstance, which occurred in the State of Virginia, relative to Mr. Jefferson, was detailed to me by Elder Andrew Tribble, about six years ago, who since died when ninety-two or three years old. The facts may interest some of your readers.

“Andrew Tribble was the pastor of a small Baptist Church which held monthly meetings at a short distance from Mr. Jefferson’s house, eight or ten years before the American Revolution. Mr. Jefferson attended the meetings of the Church several months in succession, and after one of them he asked Elder Tribble to go home and dine with him, with which he complied.

“Mr. Tribble asked Mr. Jefferson how he was pleased with their Church government? Mr. Jefferson replied that it had struck him with great force, and had

interested him much; that he considered it the only form of *pure democracy* that then existed in the world, and had concluded that it would be the *best plan of government for the American colonies*. This was several years before the Declaration of Independence."

Gervinus, the most astute and philosophic historian of his age, in his work entitled, "An Introduction to the History of the Nineteenth Century," says:

"In accordance with these principles, Roger Williams insisted in Massachusetts upon allowing entire freedom of conscience, and upon entire separation of the Church and State. But he was obliged to flee, and in 1636 he formed in Rhode Island a small and new society, in which perfect freedom in matters of faith was allowed, and in which the majority ruled in all civil affairs. Here, in a little state, the fundamental principles of political and ecclesiastical liberty practically prevailed, before they were even taught in any of the schools of philosophy in Europe. At that time people predicted only a short existence for these democratical experiments—universal suffrage, universal eligibility to office, the annual change of rulers, perfect religious freedom—the Miltonian doctrines of schisms. But not only have these ideas and these forms of government maintained themselves here, but precisely from this little State have they extended themselves throughout the United States. They have conquered the aristocratic tendencies in Caroline and New York, the High Church in Virginia, the theocracy in Massachusetts, and the monarchy in all America. They have given laws to a continent, and, formidable through their moral influence, *they lie at the bottom of all the democratic movements which are now shaking the nations of Europe.*"

In his historical "Memoirs of the English Catholics," Charles Butler makes allusion, as follows, to our Baptist fathers:

"It is observable that this denomination of Christians, now truly respectable, but in their origin as little intellectual as any, first propagated the principles of religious liberty."

We take a sincere pride in the fact that Baptists were the earliest witnesses for soul-freedom. Others have but followed in their track. They led the way, and made it clear to the vision of trampled nations, by pouring out their own blood to make it. This noble blow, struck before all others. In the warfare against spiritual despotism, should live for them, in the mind of the world, an enduring monument of hopeful and emulative remembrance. Yet, for our principles, we have been everywhere spoken against. Says Underhill:

"The Papists abhorred the Baptists, for, if their doctrines prevailed, a Church hoary with age, laden with the spoils of many lands, rich in the merchandise of souls, must be broken down and destroyed. The Protestants hated them; for their cherished headship, their worldly alliances, the pomps and circumstances of State religion, must be debased before the kingly crown of Jesus. The Puritans defamed the, for Baptist sentiments were too liberal and free for those who sought a Papal authority over conscience, and desired the sword of the higher powers to enforce their wily discipline."

Says Shelden & Williard:

"The Baptists have ever been the firm friends and supporters of religious liberty. The right which they claim for themselves of professing their own religion, they cheerfully concede to all. To punish men for religious opinions peaceably asserted, without injury to civil society, they consider persecution."

Papists and Protestants have united in the destruction of Baptists.

"During the wars of the Reformation, the Papists and Protestants destroyed each other in every possible manner. Never were enemies more bitter or uncompromising. In but one thing only was it possible for them to agree, and that was the persecution of Baptists. Here they harmonized perfectly; and it is remarkable that in several of their treaties, as recorded by Dr. Merle D'Aubigne', special articles were inserted, binding both parties to use every possible effort to destroy all the Baptists in Europe."—*Address before the American Baptist Historical Society.*

Baptists are still prosecuting their great mission in England and Europe, remonstrating against the iniquitous union of Church and State, pleading with Protestants to grant universal liberty of conscience in religion.

The British *Banner*, of July 10, 1850, states that a petition was presented from one hundred and twenty ministers and delegates of the Associated Baptist Churches of Yorkshire, praying for the separation of Church and State, and that the national property, hitherto engrossed by a few sects, might be devoted to secular and really useful purposes.

Let monarchists and Papists hate and sneer at Baptists, but, with these facts before their eyes, how can true-hearted American republicans and patriots? With such a history, honored and pre-eminently illustrious as is the very name of Baptist by the glories of such principles and such heroic achievements under such

sacrifices. Baptists can afford to bear the odium attempted to be cast upon them by the descendants of those who shed their blood.

“Many attempts have been made to exterminate them. Like their earlier brethren, ‘they had a trial of cruel mocking and scourging, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.’\* \* \* They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. ‘But the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.’ Light has succeeded darkness, hope despair, prosperity has followed adversity, and today the Baptist denomination stands as a monument to the faithfulness of God, in fulfilling his promises to those who love, follow, and trust him.”

I can say, in closing this brief review of our principles and history, with a brother “Anabaptist:”

“We feel no blush of shame mantling our cheeks as we trace the history of our fathers. True they were not great according to the world’s estimate of greatness. They were not noble after any human standard patent of nobility. Our Church did not spring into existence at the mandate of royalty. Our doctrines were not warmed into life by the sunshine of court favor. Our people did not occupy the high places of worldly dignity. They were the outcasts of the outcast. They were the persecuted of the persecuted. They were counted unworthy to dwell with those who were themselves the victims of proscription. But they were among the moral heroes whose characters brighten under the searching light of history; and they have left to their descendants a name which they may be proud to bear, and an example which they should be zealous to emulate.

“They have swelled that list of confessors and martyrs to whom the world is slow to render its acknowledgment. But their record is on high, and their time is sure.”

**“Their blood was shed**

**In confirmation of the noblest claim,--**

**Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,**

**To walk with God, to be divinely free,**

**To soar and to anticipate the skies,**

**Yet few remember them. They lived unknown,**

**Till persecution dragged them into fame,**

**and chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew—**

**No marble tells us whither. With their names  
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song.  
And history, so warm on meaner themes,  
is cold on this."**

## **A HISTORICAL FACT**

### **POPE STEPHEN THE AUTHOR OF SPRINKLING**

The Rt. Rev. J. T. M. Trevern, D. D., Bishop of Strasburg, a high dignitary of the Catholic Church, in 1847, wrote a book in defense of his Church, called "The discussion Amicale." It was addressed in the form of letters to the clergy of every Protestant communion, but especially to those of the Church of England. The object of the work was to show the inconsistencies of Protestants in proclaiming the word of God as their only rule, while they follow the traditions of Rome. On page 147, vol. ii, he says:

"The clergy of Elizabeth, in unison with the innovators of the continent, and, like the, in opposition to the sacred books and antiquity, declared accordingly that the holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, or can not be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. But, without going any further, show us, my lords, the validity of your baptism, by Scripture alone! Jesus Christ there ordains that it shall be conferred, not by pouring water on the heads of believers, but by believers plunging in water.

"The word *baptizo*, employed by the Evangelists, strictly conveys this signification, as the learned are agreed, and at the head of them Casaubon, of all Calvinists the best learned in the Greek language. Now baptism by immersion has ceased for many ages, (among those whom this man esteem Christians, we, Anabaptists, who always used immersion, he did not esteem Christians,) and you yourselves, as well as we, have only received it by infusion. It would, therefore, be all up with your baptism unless you established it by tradition and the practice of the Church, (i. e., Roman Catholic.) This being settled, I ask you from whom have you received baptism? Is it not from the Church of Rome? And what do you think of her? Do you not consider her a heretical, and even idolatrous? You can not then, according to the terms of Scripture, prove the validity of your baptism, and to produce a plan for it, you are obliged to seek it with Pope Stephen, and the

Councils of Arles and Nice, in Apostolic tradition.”

This is the testimony of one of the most distinguished scholars in the Catholic Church, bearing testimony to a historical fact. Can his testimony be set aside?

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[1] See Orchard, vol. 1, page 286.

[2] Robinson’s Ecclesiastical Researches, p. 311

[3] See *Robinson’s History of Baptism*, chap. Xiii, sec. 5, and *Wall*, vol. iv.

<sup>4</sup> Since these names, with others which could be recorded, are some of the most distinguished for respectability, in the annals of history, one plain evidence enforces itself upon our attention, that Pedobaptism was unknown among royalty, courtiers, and respectable persons in Europe, at the period of these eminent men’s births.

<sup>5</sup> *Danver’s Treat.*, p. 72. *Daille’s Use of the Fathers*, b. 2, ch. 6, Reas. 6, p. 149.

[6] *History of Inf. Bap.*, pp. 2, 42.

[7] *Stennett’s Ans.*, etc. p. 87.

[8] Those who wish to be satisfied with the strength of our claims will do well to read, after the New Testament, Orchard’s *Chronological History of Baptists*, vols. i. and ii.; Robinson’s *History of Baptism*, and Ecclesiastical Researches vols. i. and ii.

[9] *Mosheim*, vol. iii, p. 79

## [Chapter 4 - Two Other Questions](#)

## [Chapter 6 - The Catholics Themselves in a Tri-lemma](#)