

The Tri-lemma;

OR,

DEATH BY THREE HORNS

BY J. R. GRAVES

CHAPTER VII.

THE FREEWILL BAPTISTS

The Freewill Baptists are Baptists only in respect to the act and design of baptism, which of course, precludes the practice of infant baptism.

In doctrine they are Arminians, and consequently believe in the possibility of the final apostasy of the regenerated.

They believe in the possibility of being cleansed from *all* sin in this life—are perfectionists—and are “open” in their communion. In fact, in doctrine they are immersed Methodists, and in church government are modified Presbyterians.

They have but two offices—those of Elder and Deacon—and four different ecclesiastical bodies: 1st. The church. 2d. The Quarterly Conference. 3d. The Yearly Meeting. 4th. The General Conference—the latter composed of ministers elected from the yearly meetings.

This sect was originated by one Benj. Randall, of New Hampshire, who was, at the time, only a licensed minister of the Baptist Church.

Such were his powers of persuasion that, though an unlettered man, a number of Baptist ministers embraced his sentiments, and were excluded from the Baptist Church. These united in ordaining Mr. Randall to the ministry, though not ministers themselves, and not even so much as members of a church! Shortly after his ordination (?) in 1780, he organized a society, which he called a church, in the town of New Durham, N. H. “This was the first Freewill Baptist Church in America, and perhaps the world.”—“*Churches and Sects*,” p. 141. This is the tri-lemma in which this opposing sect finds itself.

Baptist churches are either the true churches of Christ or they are not.

If they are true churches, then Freewill Baptists are but sectaries, and without baptism or church membership, and their ministers unbaptized and without authority to baptize, because apostates, and excluded from the church of Christ.

But if Baptist churches are not scriptural churches, then they had no authority, and could not administer valid baptism. Freewill Baptists can not be churches in any sense, for they are without baptism or a ministry, their first ministers having been baptized by the Baptists, and subsequently all excluded and deprived of the authority to baptize. Freewill Baptists can not answer this question yea or nay, without destroying themselves as churches—viz:

Are the baptisms of Baptist churches valid?

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