

The Tri-lemma;

OR,

DEATH BY THREE HORNS

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAMPELLITES

They Find Themselves in a Tri-lemma—They Are Not Agreed Whether They Ought to Baptize Excluded Baptists Coming to Them or Not—In Some States They Do, in Others They Do Not—They Can Not Tell Whether the Baptisms of Baptists are Valid or Not and Save Their Own.

This modern sect was originated by Alexander Campbell, in Bethany, Virginia, in 1827. A short history from unquestioned sources will be useful to those who have to meet the assaults of this preeminently bellicose sect:

“Mr. Campbell was born a Presbyterian in Scotland, and was educated for the ministry in the University of Glasgow. He set sail for America in 1809. Landing at New York, he proceeded to Pennsylvania, where he commenced his labors in this country. Soon after he became a citizen of West Virginia, and while still a Pedobaptist he gathered a small society at Bush Run. During this period he made an unsuccessful attempt at reformation upon the following principles: “Faith in Jesus as the true Messiah, and obedience to Him as our Lawgiver and King, the *only test* of Christian character, and the *only bond* of Christian union, communion and co-operation, irrespective of all creeds, opinions, commandments, and traditions of men.”—Chy. Res., p. 9. Of this attempt Mr. Campbell says: “On this bottom we put to sea, with scarcely hands enough to man the ship. We had head winds and rough seas,” etc.--Chy. Res., p. 10.

After his failure in this attempt at reformation, he decided to unite with the Baptists; *not because he was one in principle*, but because he regarded them as “being favorable to his views of reform.” Accordingly, in 1812, he was immersed by Elder Luce, a Baptist minister, without the action or authority of any Baptist Church, and contrary to invariable and recognized law and usage of Baptist churches. I will quote from the Memoirs of Mr. Campbell, written by his son-in-

law, Mr. Richardson:

“Wednesday, the 12th day of June, 1812, having been selected, Elder Luce, in company with Elder Henry Spears, called at Thos. Campbell’s on their way to the place chosen for the immersion which was the deep pool in Buffalo Creek, where three members of the Association had formerly been baptized. Next morning, as they were setting out, Thos. Campbell simply remarked that Mrs. Campbell had put up a change of raiment for *herself* and *him*, which was the first intimation given that they also intended to be immersed.” * * Alexander had stipulated with Elder Luce that the ceremony should be performed precisely according to the pattern given in the New Testament, and that there was no account of any of the first converts being called to give what is called a ‘religious experience.’ This modern custom should be omitted, and that the candidates should be admitted on the simple confession that ‘Jesus is the Son of God.’ Elder Luce had, indeed, at first objected to these changes, *as being contrary to Baptist usages*, but finally consented, remarking that he believed they were right, and he would run the risk of censure. There were not, therefore, upon this occasion, any of the usual forms of receiving persons into the church upon a detailed account of religious feelings and impressions. THERE WAS, INDEED, NO BAPTIST CHURCH-MEETING TO WHICH ANY SUCH ‘EXPERIENCE’ COULD HAVE BEEN RELATED. Elders Luce and Spears, with Elder D. Jones, of Eastern Pennsylvania, being the only Baptists known to have been present.”—*pp. 396-398.*

Mr. Campbell and his father continued members of the Bush Run Society, which he had organized previous to his immersion by Mr. Luce, until the next year, when it, with all the Campbells, upon the presentation of a satisfactory creed or confession, were received as a Baptist Church into the Red Stone Baptist Association. Not until 1823 did Mr. Campbell commence putting forth his peculiar views of baptism in order to the remission of sins, and his new system of Christianity, and in 1827 the Baptists expelled him and all who embraced his unscriptural views.

Campbellites of this day deny this, claiming that they withdrew from the Baptists, but Mr. Campbell declares that he, with all the brethren of the reformation, were *excluded*, not of their choice, but by constraint. “They [the Baptists] *declared non-fellowship* with the brethren of the reformation this BY CONSTRAINT, NOT OF CHOICE, they were obliged to form societies out of those communities that split upon the ground of adherence to the apostolic doctrine.”

This is Mr. Campbell's own testimony. It was out of those who, like himself, were excluded for heresy, that Mr. Campbell originated his scheme he calls a church.

Now, then, several things in connection with the rise of Campbellism that deserves especial notice:

THE WHOLE SECT IS MANIFESTLY AND CONFESSEDLY
WITHOUT CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

1. According to all the principles that characterize Baptists, neither Alexander Campbell nor his father was scripturally baptized.

2. Mr. Luce had no authority from Christ or a Christian Church to baptize Mr. Campbell as he did, and therefore the act was null and void.

The Church that ordained Mr. Luce, nor the Church he served as pastor, gave him a shadow of authority to go forth and baptize whomsoever he deemed qualified, even after hearing from them an experience of grace. The credentials—commission—that a Baptist minister receives from a church is to preach the Gospel and to administer the ordinances—i.e., when called upon by a church to do so. This is understood, because all Baptist churches hold that the ordinances are church ordinances, in and under the control of each church. It is claimed that he may administer one ordinance, as baptism, to whom and where he sees fit, then he is equally empowered to administer the Lord's Supper when and to whom he pleases, for the principle can not be divided. Mr. Luce had no authority to baptize Mr. Campbell, and therefore the immersion he performed in Buffalo Creek was not Christian Baptism.

3. But suppose I grant what some claim, that Mr. Luce, being an ordained Baptist minister, was thereby authorized to baptize. It must be admitted that the Church granted this upon the express or implied understanding that her minister should require the same evidence of regeneration of heart that she herself required; not less, and certainly upon no evidence whatever. But Mr. Campbell refused to give any evidence of sins remitted or regeneration of heart, for he had no such evidence to give. He did not profess to be in the enjoyment of pardon, nor did he profess that he had any evidence of regeneration of heart previous to his immersion. Therefore his immersion by Mr. Luce was no Christian baptism,

even if I grant that Mr. Luce had scriptural authority to baptize him, for Mr. Campbell *was not a qualified subject*. Had he even gone before a Baptist Church, and by it been received and immersed, the act would not have been scriptural baptism, unless it had been upon and into a profession of conscious regeneration—a heart ‘sprinkled from an evil conscience.’ But, upon his own theory,

MR. CAMPBELL NEVER WAS BAPTIZED.

He says:

“Remission of sins can not be enjoyed by any person before immersion. Belief of this testimony is what impelled us *into the water*, knowing that the efficacy of His blood is to be communicated to our consciences in the way which God has pleased to appoint. We stagger not at the promise, but flee to the sacred ordinance [water of baptism] *which brought the blood of Jesus in contact with our consciences*. WITHOUT KNOWING AND BELIEVING THIS, IMMERSION IS A BLASTED NUT—THE SHELL IS THERE, BUT THE KERNAL IS WANTING.”—Christian Baptism, p. 521.

Mr. Campbell’s baptism, then, according to his own theory, was a *blasted nut*, for—1st Mr. Luce never immersed him for any such purpose. No Baptist Church or Baptist minister ever baptized to bring the blood of Christ in contact with the conscience of his subject, or to procure for him the remission of sins or regeneration of his heart. Mr. Campbell himself, at this time, 1812, did not know or believe any such doctrine. He had never thought of it in his wildest imaginations. It was years after his baptism before his preaching or writings were tainted by these heretical conceptions. Therefore Mr. Campbell, himself being his own judge, was never scripturally baptized, nor were any of his first ministers or followers, and consequently since a pure stream can not flow from an impure fountain, the Campbellites of this age are all unbaptized and without authority to baptize. But Campbellites, as well as Protestants, are impaled upon the middle horn of a tri-lemma—they can not tell whether the baptisms of Baptist are from heaven or of men. For—

Baptist churches are the true churches of Christ or they are false ones.

For if they are true churches, Campbellite societies evidently are not, but schismatics, that have been excluded from these true churches, and consequently are without authority to preach or to baptize.

If Baptist churches are false, as Mr. Campbell declares, and multitudes of his societies that immerse Baptists who come to them, then Mr. Campbell was both unbaptized and unordained, as are all his ministers today, and without the shadow of authority to baptize: and therefore the whole denomination, being unbaptized, are no church of Christ in any sense.

A false church can not administer valid baptisms or ordinations, and Mr. Campbell and his ministers received theirs from the Baptists, whose churches and baptisms they deny to be scriptural! Will not Campbellites ask themselves this question, when they re-immersed our excluded members,

WHO BAPTIZED MR. CAMPBELL?

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