

# **The Tri-lemma;**

**OR,**

**DEATH BY THREE HORNS**

**BY J. R. GRAVES**

**CHAPTER IV.**

**TWO OTHER QUESTIONS.**

**Can Protestants oppose the Papacy without being slain by the  
Papacy?**

**Can Baptists oppose the Papacy without destroying Protestants?**

I take the negative of both questions. How can two unite to war except they be agreed? They are violently antagonistic. They hate each other with a cruel hatred, scarcely less than they differ from and hate Baptists.

Episcopalians are opposed by Presbyterians and Methodists; while Episcopalians and Presbyterians unite in making war upon Methodists. Old and New School Presbyterians and Congregationalists are each seeking the overthrow and annihilation of the other, and still, like Pilate and Herod, they will all unite in a league of amity and friendship, to oppose the influence of Baptists, either in seeking the salvation of sinners or the dissemination of their principles. Talk about all these uniting in *open communion* at the Lord's table, in token of Church, and Christian fellowship! What *impious hypocrisy*, what a solemn mockery-a *blasphemous farce*, to thus prostitute the holy emblems to the propagation of a *falsehood*? We say Protestants are engaged in a fierce and deadly conflict among themselves, to annihilate each other; how, then, can they unite against Popery?

But could they unite, wherein can they judge the Catholics, without condemning, also, themselves? What principle of Papacy, save that of

idolatry, can they attack without their blows recoiling most fearfully upon their own systems and practices?

1. *Will they deny that the Roman Catholic Church is a Scriptural Church, and denounce her as the "Mystery of Iniquity," "The Woman dressed in scarlet, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth?"*

Can not Rome justly say: "Spare me, my *dear children*, and honor your mother, if you would be respected. Do you not all call yourselves *Protestants* and *Reformed*? You then admit yourselves once to have been a *part of myself*, and to have proceeded forth from me! Do you not, to-day, call yourselves 'branches of THE CHURCH?' Of what, Church are you branches, but of the HOLY ROMAN CATHOLIC, in which you all acknowledge you originated, and from which, as a branch from a parent trunk, you confessedly proceed? If I, the Catholic Church, am the *mother of 'harlots,'* and *'abominations'* of the earth, you are all my *children*, and consequently are THOSE VERY HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS! You do not well, my daughters, thus to cast reproach upon your *parentage*. I commend to you the example and filialness of your sister, my *favorite* child, the Episcopal Church, which, like a prodigal, is returning to her mother's house."

Could not Rome thus cause the well-aimed blow to recoil upon her Protestant children,\* for they are her legitimate offspring; and if she is the mother of abominations and harlots, Protestants are they. If the fountain is corrupt, all the waters that flow from it are also corrupt. If the Church of Rome is an illegitimate Church they are illegitimate Churches also. Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt"--(Matt. vii.: 23)--is a principle established by the Great Teacher.

(\*Baptists are not Protestants, having never belonged to the Catholic Church, more than to-day. "Baptists," said Sir Isaac Newton, "are the only people that never symbolized with Popery.")

2. *Will they deny her the age she claims--that she was founded by Peter, and once presided over by him and preserved against the gates of hell?*

They must do this, else Rome stands forth a Christian and apostolic Church, and besides her there is none other. But they deny her claims, and charge her with being, from the days of Paul, that spirit of *Antichrist* that worked in the early Churches, corrupting Christianity; that it was early repudiated by all the pure Churches; that Popery had no existence in its present form until established by Hilderbrand, A. D. 606; that no Church, similar to the Roman Catholic, was instituted by Christ or his apostles, or existed within six hundred years of their day; and, moreover, all the teachings of the Scriptures positively forbid the idea of such a monstrous system.

Can not Rome reply, "My dear children, do you not see that you commit suicide by taking such a position to discredit *my claims!* You can not, with the least regard to reason, believe that such systems as yours existed in the days of the Apostles, surely, each radically different from, and destructive of, the other! Did Paul found an *Episcopal* Church at Antioch, a *Presbyterian* Church at Ephesus, and a *Methodist* one at Philippi? Certainly not. All the Churches that were founded in the Apostles times, were one and identical in *doctrine*, in *organization*, ordinances, and practices. But you do not even claim that you existed in the days of the Apostles, or were founded by them. I know the parentage of each of you, and *beheld you when you were born*. You, my most dutiful, Church of England, are the offspring of my wayward and licentious boy, Henry VIII., who was led astray by the love of the beautiful Ann Boleyn. A. D. 1534.

"You my Lutheran daughter, by the bold and impetuous Martin Luther, A. D. 1525.

"You, my Presbyterian daughter, by the stern and austere Calvin, A. D. 1541; while I acknowledge you, dear Methodists, being all the children of Wesley, by, the Church of England, (A. D. 1784,) as my legitimate and worthy *grandchildren*, and though quite too noisy and fanatical, yet I can not but be quite partial to you, since, next to your mother, the Church of England, you possess nearly all my features; indeed, the *likeness* is striking and remarkable!"

3. *Will Protestants charge the Church of Rome with being "mystical Babylon," and that "scarlet woman," drunken with the blood of the saints?*

May not Rome reply: "If I am BABYLON, because I have persecuted and shed the blood of the heretical Anabaptists, then do *you also belong to Babylon*, for which one of you all have not imbued your hands in their blood? *Your own garments* are scarlet and blood-dyed, as well as my own! It becomes us to keep these *family matters* among ourselves, and not charge each other before our enemies."\*

[[\*Read Rev. xviii: 24: The blood of all the saints is to be found in Babylon." If Protestant seats have shed the blood of saints, are they not a part of mystical Babylon?]]

4. *Will Protestants denounce Rome for the iniquitous and blasphemous assumptions of her clergy of the "Divine right" to legislate for the Church of Christ, to make, change, or abolish, rites and ceremonies, etc.?*

Do not Protestants claim the same ANTICHRISTIAN POWERS? See Methodist Discipline, Art. xxii: "Every particular Church may *ordain, change, or abolish* rites and ceremonies, so that all things be done to edification"--of whom?

The rulers or the judges, of course. They, then, claim to ordain or institute, change and abolish until they are themselves perfectly suited, pleased, and satisfied! Is not this claiming *Antichristian powers*? Does the Pope claim more power?

CALVIN says: "From the beginning the Church has freely allowed herself, excepting the substance, to have rites a little *dissimilar*, for some immerse *thrice*, and others only *once*;" and he therefore abolished immersion altogether, as inconvenient and ordained sprinkling in the room of Christ's appointment. He had as good a right to have forbidden baptism entirely, as to change its action in the least. He did abolish *Christian* baptism, and substituted *clerical* baptism instead of it.

5. *Will Protestants declare before the world, that the ordinances administered by the Priests of Rome are invalid, since Rome is no Church, but Antichrist, and her priests therefore the ministers of Antichrist?*

Can not Rome reply: "It is quite unfortunate for you to say so, since you unbaptize Luther and Calvin, and all your first ministers, and thereby acknowledge yourselves unbaptized, and without authority to baptize. If you are not concerned for my honor, you should be for that of those whom you boast of as your ecclesiastical fathers and founders. The less you say about my *baptisms* and *ordinances* the better."

[Presbyterian to Episcopalian, aside: "*It would be, as fatal to us, to admit her to be the true Church of Christ; for, if so, all we Protestants are evidently schismatics and heretics, and we have been excommunicated from, and anathematized by, her; and, therefore, if she is a true Church, we are no Churches, but in rebellion to Christ. What shall we say?*"]

The dilemma presented by the Archbishop of York to the British Parliament, early as 1558, vaunting itself upon its orthodoxy and succession apostolic, is worthy of special attention just here, and it will show that Presbyterians are not alone between two horns, and impaled upon a third! Here it is:

"The Romish Church is either a true Church or a false one.

"If *true* then the Church of England--we may add, all Protestants and Reformed Churches, are schismatics, and have been excommunicated.

"If *false*, then the English Episcopal clergy, and all Protestant ministers, have false orders, are unordained, and without authority to administer the ordinances."

The Parliament heard this with no little *vexation*, saw the fatal *dilemma* in which Protestants were placed, but could not make an election of its horns. It left the question undecided, and left the Romish priests to enjoy a decided triumph. That victory Rome can ever win in conflict with her children.

How can Baptists deny the validity of the ordinances of the Romish Church, without thereby, destroying Protestant baptisms and ordinations?

6. *Will Protestants protest against the unscriptural orders of the Catholic clergy, since Christ made all his ministers equal, and only one order?*

But the advocates of Episcopacy, whether Protestant or Methodist, have their three *orders* at least, and their *inferior* and *superior* ministers.

7. *Will they protest against the irreligious practice of the inferior Catholic clergy, of being solemnly sworn to obey reverently in all things the superior clergy?*

The Methodist and Episcopal inferior clergy are compelled to do the same thing! *See Office for Ordination of Deacons and Elders in their Prayer Book and Discipline.* Here is the oath Catholic Priests are bound to take before they, are empowered by the Pope, or their chief ministers, to administer the sacrament of the Church: THE OATH OF A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST.

"I. N., elect of the Church of N., from hence-forward will be faithful and obedient to St. Peter, the Apostle, and to the holy Roman Church, and to our Lord, the Lord N., and to his successors canonically coming in. I will neither advise, consent, nor do anything that they may lose life or member, or that their persons may be seized, or hands anywise laid upon them, or any injuries offered to them, under any pretense whatsoever. The counsel which they shall intrust me withal, by themselves, their messengers, or letters, I will not, knowingly, reveal to any, to their prejudice. I will help them to defend and keep the Roman Papacy, and the royalties of St. Peter, saving my order against all men. The Legate of the Apostolic See going and coming, I will honorably treat and help in his necessities. The rights, honors, privileges, and authority of the holy Roman Church, of OUR LORD THE POPE, and his aforesaid successors, I will endeavor to preserve, defend, increase, and advance. I will not be in any council, action, or treaty, in which shall be plotted against our said Lord and the said Roman Church, anything to the hurt or prejudice of their persons, right, honor, state, or power; and if I shall know any such thing to be treated or agitated by any whatsoever, I will hinder it to the extent of my power and as soon as I can, will signify it to our said Lord, or to some other, by whom it may come to his knowledge. The rules of the holy fathers, the apostolic decrees, ordinances, or disposals, reservations, provisions, and mandates, I will observe with all my might, and cause to be observed by others. Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our said Lord, or his aforesaid successors, I will, to the extent of my power, persecute and oppose."

THE OATH OF AN EPISCOPALIAN OR METHODIST MINISTER TO HIS  
PRESIDING ELDERS AND BISHOP.

"The bishop reads: 'And now that this present congregation of Christ here assembled may also understand your minds and wills in these things and that *this your promise* may the more move you to do your duties, ye shall answer plainly to these things which we IN THE NAME OF GOD and his Church shall demand of you touching the same.'"

Is not this an *oath*? Is it not a solemn appeal to God? Is not this affirmation put in the name of God? It is then an oath.--(See *Webster's Dictionary*.)

The bishop then proceeds

"The Bishop: 'Will you REVERENTLY OBEY your *chief ministers*, unto whom is committed the *charge* and *government* over you; following, with a glad mind and will *their* godly admonitions, submitting yourself to their GODLY JUDGMENTS?'

"Ans: 'I will do so, *the Lord being my helper!!*'"

Read it again--is it not a mistake? Can such a solemn, awful oath fall from a professing Christian's, much less Christian minister's lips? Read it:

"The Bishop says: 'Will you REVERENTLY OBEY *your chief ministers*, unto *whom* is committed the CHARGE AND GOVERNMENT OVER YOU; FOLLOWING WITH A GLAD MIND AND WILL THEIR GODLY ADMONITIONS SUBMITTING YOURSELVES TO THEIR GODLY JUDGMENTS.'

"Answer of the elder: 'I will *so do*, the Lord [forgive the poor deluded soul] being my helper!!'"



Blessed Savior! and can this be the language of one of *thy* ministers--of a Protestant Christian freeman, in the nineteenth century? And didst thou not most solemnly command thy disciples to acknowledge no master--no lawgiver, but thyself; and to teach only what thou hast enjoined upon them? And do they not here, as do the ministers of Antichrist, solemnly vow to take self-appointed lordlings for their masters, in all things, regardless of what thou hast commanded--and that so fully, so absolutely, as to exercise no judgment or will of their own in reserving any liberty to consult *thy will*?

Is not this a *more stringent oath* than the Catholic priests take to obey and do the bidding of their Pope? Does it not positively deprive one of the exercise of any mind, or will, or judgment of his own? Does it not reduce the Methodist circuit-rider and elder to a mere *passive tool*, blindly *subservient to the will and wishes* of their ghostly superiors? Am I mistaken? Read under the duties of preachers, Rule 12, which these Protestant ministers are especially asked if they have read and will observe:

"12th Rule. Act in all things, not according to *your own* will, but as a *son* (i. e. our servant) in the Gospel! As such it is your duty to employ your time in the manner which WE direct in preaching and visiting from house to house in reading, meditation and prayer. ABOVE ALL, [hear it, O ye heavens! and be astonished, O ye earth-- hear it above preaching the Gospel, reading God's Word, obeying Christ, or even prayer; yes, above *all*,] if you labor with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which WE advise, at those *times* and places which WE judge most for his glory!"

*Slavery--spiritual serfdom*--what shall we say? We have no language in which to express our feelings. Were an angel from heaven to presume to impose such a law upon a mortal, he would be thrust down to darkness in a

moment; and for a mortal--a poor fallen mortal--to demand service of his fellow!

If this is not a bold example and illustration of Antichrist, and the pretensions and blasphemous assumptions of the "Man of Sin," opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, the world has never yet beheld one!

Is not this an *antichristian* power, that makes implicit and *servile* obedience to its mandates the first and most important duty--the one above even the worship of God (prayer) and the reading or teaching his Word!--to heed and obey the will of man more than the will of God! This is setting man above God!

Can Baptists assail this principle of the Papacy without incurring the displeasure of every minister of the Episcopal and Methodist hierarchies?

*8. Will they charge the Catholics with blasphemy for giving the titles that belong to God to the pontiff, and cardinals, and bishops?*

Are not Episcopalians and Methodists guilty of the same sin? See, the title given to the late

Bishop Hedding, in the Methodist Preacher, (Introduction, page 1:) "THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD!" This smacks of my Lord God the Pope. See titles of the Episcopal clergy.

*9. Will they object to the Pope because he claims the power of the keys?*

The Protestant clergy claim *each*, the same power! Methodist bishops and elders claim it, and Presbyterian ministers and their elders!

*For a full discussion of this, see the Letter on "Key Power," page 247.*

10. *Will Protestant sects attack the Catholics because they claim that the supreme visible headship is vested in the Pope of Rome, since the visible Church has no earthly head?*

But they have each a head! Queen Victoria and her parliament is the head of the Church of England, as Pio Nono and his bench of cardinals is of the Catholic; the bishops and General Conference is the head of the Methodist society, and the General Assembly of Presbyterianism--*all legislative bodies*. I should prefer one great, grand head to so many little heads!

11. *Will Protestants object to Popery on the ground of her traditions?*

They hold, teach, and practice her most pernicious one--that has done Christianity more injury than all the other traditions of Popery together! Infant baptism is a *tradition* of "the Church," as well as *sprinkling* and *pouring upon* for baptism, and Catholics have never failed to cast it into the teeth of Protestants, that while they protest against the authority of the Romish Church, they practice one of her principal traditions.

What says Dr. Pise, (a priest of the Romish Church, and of high standing among that order in New York, second, perhaps, to none but Bishop Hughes,) in a lecture recently delivered in New York: "There are many things believed by all Christians at the present day, not to be found in the Scriptures. This is true with regard to infant baptism, that we and all Christians (Pedobaptist) believe in, for there is no authority for it in Scripture. We nowhere find that the apostles baptized infants, and if it be proper and necessary to baptize infants as well as adults, we have no other authority, and MUST DEPEND ENTIRELY ON TRADITION"-- of the Church of Rome, of course.

I add to this the highest Roman Catholic authority in the world, that of Mons. Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, who was preceptor to one of the kings of France, and the frank concession to that authority by the learned Mons. de la Roque, pastor of a Reformed Church at Rouen, in Normandy, who was engaged in controversy with Bishop Bossuet. Bossuet says:

"In fine, we read not in the Scripture that baptism was otherwise administered, (than by immersion;) and we are able to make it appear by the acts of councils, and by the ancient rituals, that for thirteen hundred years baptism was thus administered throughout the whole Church, as far as was possible.

"Though these are incontestable truths, yet neither we [Catholics] nor those of the pretended Reformed religion hearken to the Anabaptists, who hold mersion to be essential and indispensable; nor have either they [Protestants] or we [Catholics] feared to change this dipping (as I may say) of the whole body, into a bare aspersion or infusion on one part of it. No other reason of this alteration can be rendered than that this dipping is not of the substance of baptism; and those of the pretended Reformed religion agreeing with us in this, the first principle we have laid down is incontestable."

And in another place:

"Jesus Christ (says he) has ordered to *dip*, as we have often observed. We have also taken notice, that he was baptized in this form, that his apostles practiced it, and that it was continued in the Church down to the twelfth and thirteenth ages; and yet baptism given only by infusion [sprinkling or pouring] is admitted, without any difficulty, on the sole authority of the Church.

"Experience has shown that all the attempts of the Reformed to confound the Anabaptists by the Scripture, have been weak; and therefore they are at last obliged to allege to them the practice of the Church. We see in their Discipline, at the end of the eleventh chapter, the form of receiving adult persons into their communion, where they make the proselyted Anabaptist acknowledge that the baptism of infants *is founded on Scripture and on the perpetual practice of the Church!* When the pretended Reformed believe they have the word of God, very expressly on their side, they are not wont to build on the perpetual practice of the Church. But in this case, because the Scripture tarnishes them with nothing by which they are able to stop the mouths of the Anabaptists, it was necessary to rely on somewhat else, and at the same time to confess that in these matters the perpetual practice of the Church is of inviolable authority."

What reply did the Reformed pastor make to this authority? Did he deny that Christ commanded his disciples to immerse, and not to sprinkle? Did he deny that it had been the practice of thirteen centuries? Did he deny that the Romish Church had, upon her sole Authority, changed the action into sprinkling? No; he denies not one of the above statements, but frankly admits every one of them, and charges the Romish Church with having corrupted the ordinances by so doing.

He repeats at length what the bishop urges against the Protestants concerning the change of *dipping* into *sprinkling*, etc., in which they agree with those of the Romish Church, and their answers in the following terms:

"I was willing (says he) to report the whole passage of Mons. Bossuet, to elucidate this matter to the Protestants, who scarce ever make any reflection on it. It is true that the greatest part of them hitherto baptize only by *sprinkling*, but it is certainly an *abuse*; and this practice, which they have retained from the Romish Church without a due examination of it, as well as

many other things which they still retain, renders their baptism very defective. It corrupts both the institution and ancient usage of it, and the relation it ought to have to faith, repentance, and regeneration. Mons. Bossuet's remark, that *dipping* was in use for thirteen hundred years, deserves our serious consideration, and our acknowledgment thereupon, that we have not sufficiently examined *all that we have retained from the Romish Church*; that seeing her most learned prelates now inform us that it was *she* that first abolished a usage authorized by so many strong reasons, and by so many ages, she has done very ill on this occasion, and that we are obliged to return to the ancient practice of the Church, and to the institution of Jesus Christ. I do not say that baptism by aspersion is null--that is not my opinion; but it must be confessed, if sprinkling destroys not the substance of baptism, yet it alters it, and in some sort corrupts it--it is a defect which spoils its lawful form." *Stennet's Answer to Russen*, p. 186.

I have quoted this to give a practical illustration of how utterly impossible it is for Pedobaptists to meet the Papists. The old mother has every conceivable advantage.

12. *Will they denounce Popery for its opposition to the circulation of the pure word of God, so that every man may have every word of the "Word of Life" faithfully translated into his own language?*

Protestants, as sects, are bitterly opposed to the purest possible version in all languages and tongues, and, indeed, to-day, are giving a pure *version to no nation of earth!* Did they not refuse to circulate the version made by Dr. Judson, because it translated every word?

13. *Is not Popery an absolute and tyrannical Hierarchy, oppressive to humanity, hostile to its best interests, and, in its influence, opposed to, and destructive of, all free institutions, as of civil and religious liberty?*

It is manifest to all that the leading Protestant sects are hierarchies, or despotic aristocracies also, since the people are denied all voice in the administration of government, and the authority, legislative and executive, is placed in the hands of a few. It is a fixed fact, and easy of *clearest demonstration*, that *hierarchial* and *aristocratic* Church organizations are hostile in their influence to republican institutions; that they insensibly prepare the rising generation to favor, if not to seek, a civil government of the *same character*. It is admitted that nothing is more dangerous than a religious hierarchy or monarchy in a republic. Is the Roman hierarchy dangerous, and are the *Protestant* hierarchies less so? It is the *principle*, not the *name*; for a hierarchy is subversive of religious freedom, in whose hands soever it may be.

*Lutheranism* in the hands of Luther was opposed to civil and religious liberty, and he united his "Church" to the State in adulterous union, and it has been from then until now a persecuting power. Presbyterianism in the hands of Calvin burned Servetus in a slow fire of green wood, and, drove, by fines, imprisonments, and torturer the Baptists from the Canton of Geneva.

*Episcopalianism* is black and bloody with the murders of the martyrs of Jesus. Smithfield will witness against her in the judgment of nations that will come. (See Matt. xxiv.) Puritanism and Presbyterianism in New England, and the Episcopacy in Virginia and Georgia made manifest their opposition to religious freedom, in the bloody acts they committed in their mad attempts to crash it out, and prevent its gaining a foothold on these shores. All these are to-day opposed to free religious discussion by the pulpit and the press.

The time is not far distant when Protestant hierarchies will be repudiated by all Christians as the Papal is to-day.

14. *Will Protestants charge upon Catholics that they recognize and support the adulterous union of Church and State, telling them that the Church of Christ "is not of this world?"*

Rome could reply: "You, my daughters, have committed *harlotry* and made yourselves the 'abominations of the earth,' by the same act. Where have you had the power, and have not united the State to your Churches? Have not Episcopalians done so in England and all her colonies, and did they not retain the union in America so long as possible? Have not the Presbyterians in Scotland, and in all the continental kingdoms of Europe, as well as Lutherans, and did they not do the same thing in the American colonies?"

15. *Will Protestants denounce Rome because she denies the supremacy of the Word of God, placing as she does, the decisions of her councils and of her pontiffs before it, for the observance of her people?*

Can not Rome point the Episcopalians to their head--the reigning king, or even woman, and the Parliament of England, Presbyterians to their General Assemblies, and Methodists to their College of Bishops and General Conferences, to whose decisions they are all compelled to bow implicitly or be excommunicated?

16. *Will Protestants charge the Papacy with denying that doctrine professedly so sacred to Pedobaptist--THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY of the Word of God for faith and practice?--the Bible and the Bible alone, for all religious doctrines and duties?*

Can not Rome point to their Books of Common Prayer, Rubrics, etc., Confession of Faith, and authenticated Disciplines, that in every Protestant meeting-house are placed either on top of the Bible or by its side, but in every case the first required to be observed by Protestants. If the laws, and



traditions, and "rules" enjoined by their elders and "chief ministers" on them are not observed, the guilty Protestant is cast out of the Church of Christ--if these organizations can be so considered. Does Rome do worse?

*17. Will Protestants assail the Papacy for sweeping away the great fundamental vital doctrine of individualism, upon which all true Christianity rests, because she forbids by pains and penalties personal religious liberty, and freedom of the conscience, and forces upon her infantile, unconscious subjects, onerous rites, Church ordinances, and religious obligations, and even salvation, without either faith or voluntariness on their part.*

Would not Rome reply: "Whenever you judge me on this you condemn yourselves. You have imitated my example and adopted the very rite which I originated, by which to accomplish these very results, that I might the more easily and successfully extend my authority over the hearts and consciences of men. Were it now in your power as it has been, to carry out your principles, you would not only as thoroughly destroy the pure doctrine of personal religion, but constrain religious freedom and liberty of conscience, by 'pains and penalties,' as you have done. But you are more inconsistent than I am. While you teach the doctrine of total hereditary depravity in your Creed, you deny it in your Ritual, (for the baptism of infants,) and while you deny in your Creed the possibility of the apostasy from grace of a saint or the elect, you deny it in your Discipline." I give Rome the advantage of an extract from an able review of New England Puritanism:\*

[[\*Christian Review, No. 66]]

"And we can not refuse to see that as persecution was a settled element of their policy, so it was the natural outgrowth of their principles. Infant baptism is in its very idea opposed to individualism. It nips religious liberty in the very bud. It blasts it in the very germ. It extirpates it at the very root.

It begins by instituting sponsors for the faith of the child. It anticipates his birth, and by some mysterious process marries on the spiritual life of the child to the spiritual life of his progenitors. It does not leave him the poor privilege of being born in original sin. If, with the pious old lady, he should ever come to the conclusion that if he lost his total depravity, he would lose all his religion, his case would be hopeless. He can neither believe nor disbelieve for himself. When he grows up to moral consciousness and the period of moral responsibility, he finds, by some spiritual legerdemain, by some mysterious law of hereditary transmission, that responsibility shifted to another, and a corresponding disposition of his outward relations. While yet unborn, linked with his believing parent, he was safely infolded in the bosom of the covenant, and as soon as born has been snugly sheltered in the bosom of the Church. In unconscious infancy the vows of the Church have been laid upon him; the sacred obligations of the Christian profession assumed in his behalf. He can not quit the Church to which he has been attached in infancy, or remain aloof from it, without a forcible sundering of bands which have been cast around him. He can not think for himself without being liable to be dealt with for heresy. He can not act for himself without being liable, to be dealt with for contumacy. The Church has thrown her arms around him and she claims him as her own. 'That children, by baptism,' so runs the Westminster Declaration, approved by the General Assembly of Scotland, 'are solemnly received into the bosom of the visible Church, distinguished from the world, and them that are without, and united with believers; and that all who are baptized in the name of Christ do renounce, and by their baptism are bound to fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh; that they are Christians and federally holy before baptism, and therefore, they are baptized; that the inward grace and virtue of baptism is not tied to that very moment of time wherein it is administered, and that the fruit and power thereof reacheth to the whole

course of our life.' Ah, could the ordinance but realize these professions made in its behalf! Could the holy water sprinkled on the brow, and the holy name uttered over it really prove the talisman which it claims to be against the baleful workings of the great Foe--the enemy more potent and terrible than Death! But

'Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed,'

and he mocks at the impotent weapon which recoils from his dragon-scales.

"Now that the principle of voluntariness in religion is thus cut up at the root, that for it the principle of coercion is substituted, is self-evident. The man is bound to the Church by obligations laid upon him when he was yet unconscious, and knew neither good nor evil. And the Church having begun her work must finish it. Him whom she has brought under her discipline she must subject to her discipline; and as many may be disposed to break away and ignore the authority thus assumed over them, she must look around for some means of enforcing her claims. Her natural, her only appeal is to the arm of the civil magistrate, and her first business is, therefore, to put herself in alliance with the State.

"And here another principle comes in to her aid. The doctrine is that the child of the believer is born a Christian, and that because he is a Christian he is baptized and is a genuine member of the Church. Assume now that this is no idle parade of words, but a doctrine honestly believed and acted upon. The inevitable consequence follows. Once a Christian always a Christian, is true both for himself and his descendants 'to the last syllable of recorded time.' Piety and Church membership both become hereditary, and spread themselves by fixed and certain laws through all the ramifications and to every individual, of the race of the godly. By necessary consequence, then, individual Christianity is lost in family Christianity, and the religion of the

family soon merges into the religion of the State. Why should it not? Church and State become coincident in territory and population. The members of the State are all members of the Church, and it may well behoove them to devolve on some one, and on whom more appropriately than on the civil magistrate, the charge of seeing that none are derelict in duty; that no child is allowed, through the remissness of his parents, to lose the benefits of a rite whose consequences are so momentous, nor when grown up, to shake off the yoke of obligation which the watchful benevolence of the Church has placed upon his infant neck.

"Such, logically, such in fact, was New England Congregationalism. It broke off from a national Church which it did not like, to come over the seas and found a national Church which it did like. On the soil on which it had set its foot it planted the banner of unlimited dominion. Its parishes were territorial parishes. Its Churches were territorial Churches. It claimed the fealty of every soul born within its limits. The civil magistrate was but the instrument of the spiritual power, and dissent from the recognized modes of worship was punished as alike disobedience to God and rebellion against the State.

"Just as little is it accidental that Baptists have been the uniform advocates of religious freedom and that single-handed they have fought the battle against the banded sentiment of Christendom. It flows necessarily from their first principle. Their doctrine of individualism--of personal faith and voluntary baptism--draws along with it as with the sweep of a cataract, the absolute repudiation of all State interference between the conscience and its God. The claim of the civil power to coerce men into religious faith and union with the Church, becomes a grand impertinence--only not utterly ridiculous, because audaciously wicked. To his own master each one standeth or falleth. He is in immediate, untransferable, inviolable relations to God, and neither man nor angel can wrest from him the privilege, nor lift from him the obligation of his

high spiritual prerogative. By a logical necessity, therefore--by every principle and the whole spirit of his system, every Baptist is committed to the advocacy of religious liberty. And by a necessity equally strong, every *consistent* Pedobaptist is committed against it [as fully as the Papist.] Innocent as infant baptism seems, as slight a thing as it appears to lay the consecrating hand on the brow of the unconscious babe, and utter over it the sacred formula, it is in fact a thing of wondrous potency. If it has not precisely the consequences which the Confession assigns to it it has others scarcely less far-reaching, and of less questionable reality. Its tendency is to invite the world into the arms of the Church and then to throttle the Church in the embrace of the world. It has thus linked itself with spiritual despotism, and is at this moment in Europe the strong bond of alliance between the Church and the State.

"Nor can we fail to remark how utterly discordant is the doctrine on which infant baptism rests, with the spirit of Calvinism. An especial characteristic of the system of Calvin is its assertion of original depravity, and of our absolute dependence for moral purity on regenerating grace. How these two doctrines--an absolute heirdom of wrath, and inherited Church membership--can 'dwell together in unity,' it is impossible to discover. They are irreconcilably hostile. Like two distinct races dwelling together on the same soil, one must hold its ground at the expense of the other. In New England's early history the hereditary principle prevailed. Religion, therefore, rapidly declined from its purity. The Church was inundated by the world--by men who had no sympathy with its vital doctrines; to whom the cross was a stumbling-block, and evangelical religion foolishness. Hence, the Church lay cold and dead in the arms of her baptized enemies, until the Great Revival awoke her slumbering life. Since then, in that portion of the Church which did not renounce evangelical doctrines and faith, the Calvinistic element has been in the ascendant, and infant baptism has shrunk into little more than a

ceremony, a form of dedication by which the parent seeks to deepen his own sense of responsibility, and secure he knows not what spiritual benefit to his offspring."

I could continue this list of principles, in common with Protestants and Papists, to double the number, were it necessary; but these are sufficient for my purpose, to show that the Reformation must be radically *reformed*, and Protestantism *itself protested* against, before it can successfully grapple with the Papacy, or deserve to receive the countenance of republican-loving American Christians.

We also see the unfortunate antagonism with all the Protestant sects, into which we, as Baptists, are brought whenever we attack the *principles* of the Papacy! Our blows break their force upon Protestants; and Catholic priests smile in security behind them, as behind a bulwark. We can only reach Romanists through Protestants, for they are entrenched behind them. Their priests the more securely keep them in darkness by directing their attention to the fact that Protestants hold and practice their traditions, and defend *nearly all their important principles!* It requires great moral courage and Christian heroism in Baptists to attack these principles, since they know they will be precipitated into a fierce conflict with all Protestant sects, and expose themselves to their displeasure, hatred, and often their bitter persecutions. This ought not so to be. We can not believe that the Savior ever intended his followers to be thus divided and conflicting. We believe there are many precious Christians in the Pedobaptist sects, *though in great error*. We have no bitterness-nothing but love in our heart toward them, and this leads us to pray for them, and endeavor to convince them of their error; to leave men and follow Christ. They should unite with *us* against the in-rolling flood of Catholicism, if they love their country or the religion of Christ: and they can not do this so long as they hold the distinctive principles of the *Papacy* in

common with Papists. We beseech them for the sake of their land and religion, to repudiate these and unite with us upon the word of God, and let the *Bible and the Bible alone be our religion*. Let our principles be blazoned upon our banner:

**A PURE BIBLE ONLY--OUR PRAYER-BOOK, CONFESSION, AND  
DISCIPLINE.**

**NO REGENERATION BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD OF GOD.**

**NO SALVATION BUT BY GRACE. OBSERVING ALL THINGS, AND  
THOSE ONLY, WHICH CHRIST COMMANDED, AND AS HE  
COMMANDED.**

I protest I have not noticed, the Papal features of Protestantism but with the kindest feelings and the purest motives. These are the *weak points of Protestantism*. It is behind the age, as well as unsupported by the Bible. The Reformation needs another Luther. Were he once more to direct it, we have reason to believe that, with the light of this age, he would reform it of every feature of Romanism; he would effect the reformation he so ardently desired in his day, restore to it the primitive immersion of believers, and republicanize its government. Protestantism was chilled in the *shadow* of the sixteenth century. It has made no advancement. It is still either afraid to trust the people with self-government, or its clergy have become too corrupt to yield up the reins and scepter of ecclesiastical domination. The nineteenth century has demonstrated the truth of God's word, that man is capable of, and created for self-government, and that it is the only form of government that will secure for humanity, individually or nationally, in Church or State, the proper incentive to progress, the largest freedom, and the greatest happiness. Let Protestantism, then, bow to this fact, and grant to its membership the inalienable right which the Creator and Redeemer of man

vouchsafed him, and which the Papal and Protestant clergy have so long and so iniquitously usurped and withheld from him.