

## Contributions.

## The Commission vs. Denominationalism.

## XI.

T. B. KNOWLES.

The late Archbishop Purcell, of Cincinnati, once gave his decision on the question of the action of baptism. It was brought about as follows: Two gentlemen, one an immersionist and the other an advocate of sprinkling, were discussing the meaning of *baptized*, and the mode of baptism, in the presence of W. H. Lape of precious memory. Mr. Lape proposed that they ask the learned prelate to settle the question as to the primary meaning of the word in dispute for them. To this they both agreed, and requested Mr. Lape, who was personally acquainted with the Bishop, to ask the question for them. He did so, and, in their presence, two questions: 1st, "What is the primary meaning of the word *baptizo*?" and, "What was apostolic baptism—immersion or sprinkling?" The Bishop replied: "The primary meaning of *baptizo* is to dip, immerse; and immersion was the apostolic baptism." The Catholic Church was never taught anything else, nor has she ever attempted to justify, or prove the practice of sprinkling or pouring by an appeal to the Scriptures. She simply falls back upon the Church's right to change "the mode of administering the sacraments." "She rightly exercises a discretionary power as to the manner of their administration," so says Archbishop Kenrick. But, while she defends the practice of sprinkling and pouring, and has been the kindest mother to this, her offspring, she has, nevertheless, consistently refused to honor it with any higher parentage, no New Testament origin or authority. Nay, more, she avows her willingness, as Dr. De Viecones says, to "refute that false notion that baptism was administered in the primitive church by pouring or sprinkling." Indeed, the Catholic Church occupies the vantage ground, in her discussions with those Protestant churches that practice affusion, on the question of baptism. To the charge that she has "altered the ordinances of Christ," she keenly retorts, "Physician, heal thyself;" "For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things," as, in the words of Haydock, approved by Pope Pius IX., "Not only the Catholic Church, but also the pretended reformed churches, have altered the primitive custom in giving the sacrament of baptism, and now allow of baptism by sprinkling and pouring water upon the person baptized; nay, many of their ministers do it now-a-days by slipping a wet finger and thumb over the child's head, which it is hard enough to call a baptizing in any sense." "If," replies the Catholic, "it is a sin, as you say, to change the form of administering the New Testament sacraments, why do you continue the practice of sprinkling, which is not of New Testament authority at all, and which you simply got of us?" For, it is simply a fact, that denominationalism did kidnap affusion from the Church of Rome, and adopted it with all the care of a foster mother. But she has been rather ashamed to own its real parentage, and hence the prodigious efforts that have been made to cover up its true origin, and to find some trace of birth or name in the word *baptizo*, and in the New Testament. Both have utterly refused, however, to own either the name or the legitimacy of this offspring of Rome. But the scholarship of the Catholic Church is not alone in exposing the

futility of denominationalism along this line, for many noted men in the ranks of affusionists have, in wielding the keen blade of scholarship, cut the silken threads of argument by which it was sought to anchor this inflated notion to the New Testament, after the following fashion. Sir David Brewster (in the *Edin. Ency.*) says: "It is impossible to mark the period when sprinkling was introduced. It is probable, however, that it was invented in Africa, in the second century, in favor of clinics. But it was so far from being approved by the church in general, that the Africans themselves did not count it valid." And *Moshem* says: "In this (the first) century baptism was administered in convenient places, without the public assemblies, and by immersing the candidates wholly in water." Neander says: "Baptism was originally administered by immersion." And Dr. Schöff says: "Immersion, and not sprinkling, was unquestionably the original normal form of baptism. This is shown by the very meaning of the Greek words used to designate the rite." Again he says: "When and how came the mode of pouring and sprinkling to take the place of immersion and emersion as a rule. The change was gradual and confined to the western churches. The Roman Church, as we have seen, backed by the authority of Thomas Aquinas, 'the angelic doctor,' took the lead in the thirteenth century, yet so as to retain in her rituals the form of immersion as the older and better mode." Immersion being "the older," sprinkling is therefore too young to be apostolic. Luther says, "The term baptism is a Greek word—it may be rendered into Latin by *mersio*—when we immerse a thing in water that it may be entirely covered with water," and adds of persons baptized, "Nevertheless they ought to be wholly immersed, and immediately to be drawn out again, for the etymology of the word seems to require it." Again he says, "Baptism is nothing else than the word with immersion in water," and Venema, as quoted by A. Campbell, says, "The word *baptizo*, to baptize, is nowhere used in the Scripture for sprinkling. Dr. Samuel Clark states that in the primitive times the manner of baptizing was by immersion, or dipping the whole body into the water." And George Whitfield says: "It is certain that in the words of our text, Rom. vi. 3, 4, there is an allusion to the manner of baptizing, which was immersion, which is what our own church allows." Dr. Whitby says: "It being so expressly declared here, Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, that we are buried with Christ in baptism, by being buried under water." Also "and this immersion being religiously observed by all Christians for thirteen centuries, and approved by our church, and the change of it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the author of this institution." Dr. Thomas Chalmers says, "The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion," and Dr. Charles Anthon not only affirmed that "the primary meaning of the word *baptizo* is to dip or immerse," but says, "sprinkling, etc., are entirely out of the question." Bishop Taylor also says: "The custom of the ancient churches was not sprinkling, but immersion, in pursuance of the sense of the word (*baptizo*) in the commandment and example of our blessed Saviour." And the statement of Mede is, "There was no such thing as sprinkling, or *rantismo*, used in baptism in the apostolic times, not many ages after them. Calvin affirms that 'the ancients' administered baptism by immersing the whole body (C. notes on Acts viii. 38). And again, 'The very word *baptizo*, however, signifies to immerse, and it is certain

that immersion was the practice of the ancient church," so "sprinkling is out of the question" th Calvin also. William Burkit, commenting on Rom. vi. 4, says: "The apostle, no doubt, alludes to the ancient way and manner of baptizing persons in those hot countries, which was by immersion, or putting them under the water for a time, and then raising them up again out of the water. And Dr. James McKnight says: "Christ submitted to be baptized, that is, to be buried under the water by John, and to be raised out of it again, as an emblem of his future resurrection." And a learned body of divines, in "Annotations on the Bible," say, on Rom. vi. 4 and Col. ii. 12, "In the phrase the apostle seemeth to allude to the ancient manner of baptism, which was to dip the parties buried, and as it was to bury them under water." Conybeare and Howson affirm "that this passage (Rom. vi. 6) cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion." And Dr. Barnes, in his notes on the words, "So shall he sprinkle many nations" (Isaiah lii. 15), says: "It may be remarked that whichever of the above senses may be assigned, it furnishes no argument for the practice of sprinkling in baptism. . . . nor should it be used as an argument in reference to the mode in which that should be administered." Beza, the associate of John Calvin, says: "Christ commanded us to be baptized, by which word it is certain immersion is signified." "To be baptized in water signifies no other than to be immersed in water, which is the external ceremony of baptism." And Dr. Wall is constrained to say: "This (immersion) is so plain and clear, by an infinite number of passages, that as one cannot but pity the weak endeavor of such pedobaptists as would maintain the negative of it." Thus scholarly men—and many more might be cited belonging to the pedobaptist school—have united their testimony with that of the scholarship of the Catholic church, to "refute that false notion that baptism was administered in the primitive church by pouring or sprinkling." Surely the persistent efforts of denominationalism to uphold this institution of the Catholic church and belittle the institution of Jesus Christ, will have to be answered for. In the language of Calvin we say: "As though it were a contemptible thing to be baptized in water according to the precepts of Christ, men have invented a benediction, or rather, incantation, to pollute the true consecration of the water. . . . yet it is lawful for me and for all believers to reject everything that men have presumed to add to the institution of Christ."

## God's Covenant.

F. MACDONALD.

The word covenant, in a scriptural sense, may be defined as the promise of God to man that he shall receive temporal or spiritual blessings upon certain conditions, or upon the performance of the duties pointed out in the Old and New Testaments. The subject is an extensive one, and I have neither the time nor the ability to deal with it exhaustively. However, I shall endeavor to bring before your minds some of the leading points.

In reading the Scriptures we are apt to lose sight of the distinction between the old covenant and the new. We forget to read the Bible as an historical record. We are apt to overlook the fact that we are Gentiles and that under the Old Testament our Gentile forefathers were not recognized by God. We forget that as Gentiles our fathers had neither part nor lot in the covenant which God made with Israel. The

promises and the law of God were given to the chosen nation of Israel. Our Gentile fathers were regarded as outcasts from the commonwealth of Israel. When therefore we read of the law of Moses, the covenant of God, the Jewish priesthood, and the people of God under the Old Testament, we are reading the history of a people who were the chosen nation of God, and we forget that our Gentile fathers had no share in any of these things, but were regarded as enemies of God and His people. But under the new or Christian dispensation Jew and Gentile stand on the same footing. Paul, writing to the Gentile Christians at Ephesus, says. (Eph. ii. 11-14)—"Wherefore, remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for He is our peace, who hath made both (Jew and Gentile) one and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." As Gentiles, then, we have a special interest in the New Testament. In order to have a definite knowledge of the new dispensation the first point to be ascertained is, "When did it begin?"

The apostle, writing to the Hebrews, (chapter x. 9-10) says: "He taketh away the first that He might establish the second by the which we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Our inquiry then is, when or at what time did he take away the first covenant and establish the second by the which we are sanctified?

In the same epistle (chapter ix. 15-17), speaking of Christ as "Mediator of the New Testament," the apostle says: "For where a testament is there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." This very clearly shows that the New Testament was not in force until after the death of Jesus. This is a most important point to keep in mind. It shows that the Christian age began after the death of Christ and not while He lived on earth. It shows that the law of pardon by which men become Christians was not in force while Jesus lived and that the way of salvation could not be preached until after His death. In reviewing the incidents of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus we find that John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 9-12) first heralded His appearance and declared to the Jews that one mightier than he was coming after him whose sandals he was not worthy to unloose.

That the axe was laid at the root of every tree and that it was no longer sufficient to be Israelites or children of Abraham according to the law, but that Christ would separate the wheat from the chaff and destroy the chaff.

John therefore exhorted the Jews not to say within themselves "we are Abraham's children," but he exhorted them to repent: (or reform).

John baptized them into repentance (or immersed them into reformation) that is, introduced them by his baptism into a reformed life in order to prepare a people to receive the Messiah. Jesus also presented himself for baptism, and as he came up out of the water, after obedience to his Father's institution, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven proclaimed (Matt. iii. 17)—"This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." In the mount of transfigura-

tion God again acknowledged Jesus. Peter proposed to make three tabernacles—one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah; but the voice from heaven replied: "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." This was doubtless to prepare the minds of the Jewish disciples for the coming dispensation, when they should no longer hear Moses and the prophets, but obey Jesus Christ as Lord of all.

Jesus commanded them to tell no man the vision until he was raised from the dead.

The old Jewish law was in full force during the life of Jesus. Jesus fulfilled the law. It was just as necessary for the Jews to offer animal sacrifices up to the hour that Jesus died as it ever had been. The Jewish high priest went once a year into the holy place or inner temple where the presence of God was supposed to dwell, there to offer the blood of sacrifices and to intercede for the people. But when Jesus, expiring on the cross, cried, "It is finished," the veil of the Jewish temple was rent—the way into the presence of God was opened, and the old covenant was fulfilled. The great sacrifice had been offered. Therefore the Jewish sacrifices were no longer necessary. After His resurrection Jesus ascended into the immediate presence of God and presented the blood of His own sacrifice. He thus became the Great High Priest of His people—the mediator of the new covenant. The priesthood of Aaron had ceased. Moses was no longer the mediator and law-giver. There was a new covenant and Jesus was its high priest and law-giver. Matt. xxviii. 18-20—"All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and on earth," said Jesus to His apostles.

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world."

He further commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem for power from on high. At Pentecost the Spirit came to enlighten the apostles. The apostles proclaimed the new law of pardon in these words (Acts ii. 38)—"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."

We read that three thousand of the Jews obeyed the gospel, and thus the first Christian church was established in Jerusalem.

We can learn the terms of the new covenant from the twelve apostles only. They were given authority to teach and rule. Their preaching as recorded in Acts and their several epistles to Christians are our only guide.

The old Jewish covenant included only the Israelites. But we learn that now in this Christian age (Acts xi. 18)—"God hath also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." God taught the apostle Peter this great fact in a vision, in which He commanded that what God hath cleansed the Jewish brethren were not to call common or unclean.

Cornelius the centurion and his household were the first Gentiles baptized into Jesus Christ, an account of which is given in Acts x.

Paul, in his letter to the Christian church at Rome (Rom. xi), says that the Gentiles were taken into the Christian covenant to fill the places of those who through unbelief rejected the Messiah promised to their father Abraham. The same apostle, writing to the Christians at Galatia (Gal. iii. 24), says: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for many of you as have been baptized into Him have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither