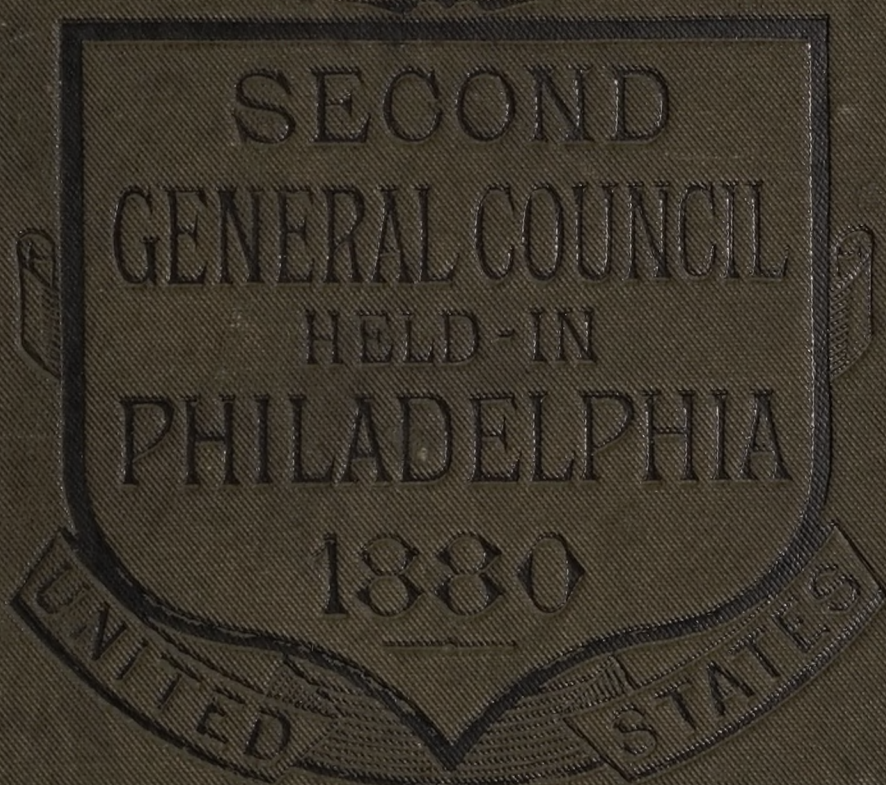




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REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

SECOND GENERAL COUNCIL

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN ALLIANCE,

CONVENED AT PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER, 1880.

PRINTED BY DIRECTION OF THE COUNCIL.

EDITED BY

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PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL COMPANY,
AND
J. C. McCURDY & CO.,
PHILADELPHIA, PA.,
CINCINNATI, O., CHICAGO, ILL., AND ST. LOUIS, MO.

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ship is that of the Westminster standards, the practice is to a considerable extent akin to that of New England under the "Half-way Covenant." Many truly earnest and consistent Christians hold back there from participation in the Lord's Supper, while receiving baptism for their children. No doubt with respect to them the position of the pastor may often be: "These are *virtually* communicants. I should have no hesitation in admitting them to full communion did they apply for it, although from special scruples and distrust of themselves they shrink from doing so." *

3. Yes; because both sacraments are seals of an *external* covenant. The visible Church is based upon this covenant, and it is to the Church visible that the sacraments belong. The conditions of entrance are a profession of historical or intellectual faith in the true religion, and an outward conformity to its rules. Applicants for the sacraments, therefore, do not profess to be Christians except in an outward way. They simply declare that they are not infidels or scoffers, and that they wish church privileges for themselves and their children.

De March and Gomar advocated this theory in Holland. Vitringa and others strongly opposed it. De Moor gives a full account of the controversy.

This was, in substance, the position of Stoddard, Blair and others in America in the eighteenth century, to which reference has been already made.†

All who have given any attention to this subject must agree with the suggestion of the Theological Faculty of Utrecht in 1648 regarding one of George Gillespie's famous CXI. Propositions, that further light was desirable on the question, "How, and how far the power of the church has to do with (and its duty may be discharged towards) *incomplete members of the Church*, so to speak; that is to say, those baptized in infancy and all other catechumens, and even hearers."

The REV. T. P. STEVENSON, D. D., of Philadelphia, also read the following paper on

BAPTISM: ITS AUTHORITY AND MEANING, AND THE PROPER SUBJECTS OF THE RITE.

The use of water as an emblem of spiritual purification, and of washing as a religious rite, is not peculiar to Christianity. Herodotus tells us that the ancient Egyptians, if they came in contact with swine, deemed themselves defiled, and for cleansing washed themselves in the Nile.‡ Great spiritual virtue is ascribed by the Hindus to the waters of the Ganges. These usages of widely separated people either point to some original institute of worship which antedated the dis-

* Comp. Schleiermacher's "Conception of an Outer and Inner Circle of 'Aspirants' and Members of the Church." *Christliche Glaube*, 2d Ed. § 148. 2 § 150. Müller, *ut supra*, 356 f.

† Hodge, *ut supra*, 563-566.

‡ Herodotus, *Euterpe*, 47.

persion of the human family, or are to be taken as testimonies to the naturalness and inherent fitness of water as an emblem of spiritual cleansing.

In connection with the true religion, the use of water is at least as old as the days of Moses and the Levitical institutions. The people were commanded to wash their clothes before meeting with God at Sinai. A laver was placed at the entrance of the tabernacle, and ten lavers, replenished continually from a brazen sea which held "three thousand baths," stood in the court of the temple.* Aaron and his sons were washed with water upon their induction to the priesthood, and were required to wash their hands and feet as often as they went in to discharge the duties of their office. The very sacrifices were washed with water before they were laid on the altar. The leper and whoever contracted ceremonial defilement, must bathe his flesh in water before he could approach the sanctuary, and these occasions of impurity were so numerous, and many of them so inevitable, that the requirement was an important sanitary regulation, as well as an impressive spiritual lesson. And when Moses had finished the announcement of the law, he took the blood of sacrifice, *with water*, and "sprinkled both the book and all the people."† These purifications were sometimes by immersion; sometimes by pouring or sprinkling.

But they were all the expression of a penitent mind, of a desire for that pardon and cleansing which the washing at once symbolized and helped to convey. In this long line of baptismal precedents appears at length the example of a stern prophet who preached the baptism of repentance, and drew all Judea to be baptized of him in Jordan. Then, as his short but fervid ministry drew to its close, came One mightier than he, whose it is to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and who sent out his apostles to preach and to baptize. He, in turn, ere the heavens opened to receive him, laid on his disciples the great commission, "Go, teach all nations, BAPTIZING them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." While, therefore, the New Testament ordinance of baptism bears the broad seal of Christ's express appointment, it was no new, strange, and unprecedented institution. It was not only in harmony with the ideas and feelings and religious usages of the people, but it was the continuation, with some modifications, of previously existing ordinances of the Church of God. In this fact we discern the operation of a law which I notice and emphasize here that I may appeal to it again: the law of gradual processes in all the works of God. As the twilight attempers the glory of the rising sun, as spring interposes between February and June, as the acorn does not in a day become an oak, nor the babe become a man, so the colors of which the web of history is woven do not appear in clear, sharp lines and strong contrasts, but kindred colors are nearest each other, and each blends into its neighboring hues. So the Old Testament dispensation was preparatory to the New, and the New is

* 2 Chronicles iv. 5.

† Hebrews x. 17.

the complement of the Old. There was no violent transition from the one to the other. Ordinances which had foreshadowed the great sacrifice were, of necessity, abolished, for sacrifices are offered to God, and, when once adequate, need to be offered no more; but even this change was gradual, and the whole Epistle to the Hebrews is an argument to mitigate its unwelcomeness by proving that we still have an altar and a priest, none the less glorious that they are invisible in the heavens. Institutions, however, which dealt *with man* in his constant, enduring needs, his need of instruction, of reformation, of worship, were, in all their essential features, retained. Among these was the washing with water for the putting away of sin. New Testament baptism cannot, therefore, be rightly studied apart from the similar Old Testament institutions out of which, historically, it arose. This fact helps at once to confirm its authority, to interpret its meaning, to fix the mode of its administration, and to determine the persons to whom it may be administered.

THE TRUE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM.

I pass next to consider the meaning and efficacy of baptism. "What mean we by this service?" What is accomplished by it? In answer to this question one voice rises distinct and positive, announcing a lofty view of this ordinance and demanding acceptance for it under pain of eternal separation from Christ and his salvation. It is the voice of those who teach that regeneration is effected in and by the act of baptism. According to this view, the Spirit of God broods or moves on the face of the water in the baptismal font, as he moved on the face of the deep at the first creation, and there imparts spiritual life as he then brought life and order and beauty out of chaos. Quoting their own words, "Water, sanctified by our Lord's baptism, is the womb of our new birth."* "Baptism," says Dr. Pusey, "hath the germ of spiritual life."† "It is that mystery whereby we are made partakers of the Incarnation—baptized into the 'One Body,' the body of our incarnate Lord."‡ "The partaking of the Incarnation and the Christian relation of sonship to God are imparted through baptism, and are not imparted without it."§ "Regeneration is the 'being born again of water and the Spirit,' or by God's Spirit moving again on the face of the waters, sanctifying them for our cleansing, and cleansing us thereby."|| This is not only the Romish doctrine of baptism. It has recently been revived and strenuously urged in the Church of England and her branches, and has even appeared among the Reformed Churches. It matters little to its advocates that the great Reformers and their immediate successors—Archbishop

* "Tracts for the Times," Vol. II., p. 43, N. Y. edition.

† "Sermon before the University of Oxford," N. Y. edition, p. 5.

‡ "Tracts for the Times," N. Y. edition, Vol. II., p. 44.

§ Ibid. p. 31.

|| Ibid. pp. 47, 48.

Cranmer, Bishops Ridley and Latimer and Coverdale, and all the most eminent men in the early history of the English Church, and a great array of illustrious names along her path from then till now, Jewell and Whitgift and Usher and Hooker and Jeremy Taylor and Hopkins and Pearson and Burnet and Tillotson and Secker—have earnestly repudiated the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, or that her Catechisms and the Thirty-nine Articles have pronounced against it. All the more earnestly do they and their sympathizers in other churches make their appeal to the word of God. And right gladly do we accept this appeal. Far be it from us to seek to overwhelm intense and sincere convictions by the citation of any lower authority.

It is, of course, altogether impossible, within the limits of this paper, to examine the several passages of the word of God which are supposed to teach this doctrine. But it is admitted that there is one ruling text, which, like a master-key throwing back the bolts of every lock, controls the interpretation of the rest. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration stands or falls with our understanding of John iii. 5: "Verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

These words were uttered in answer to the question of Nicodemus, "How can a man be born when he is old?" And when, to this reply of Jesus, the inquirer still responded, "How can these things be?" the divine Teacher answered him with words not of further explanation, but of reproof: "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"

The new birth of which Christ had spoken was a subject with which Nicodemus ought to have been familiar. And so, indeed, he ought, if Christ's words denoted simply that moral and spiritual change which the truth, made effectual by the Spirit, works in the soul, enlightening the understanding, quickening right emotions, and renewing the will. This change was indispensable to salvation under the Old Testament as well as under the New, and it behooved every "master in Israel" to be able to point it out to others. But if our Saviour was here expounding the value and significance of the new, and, in this respect, altogether unprecedented ordinance of Baptism as an "overwhelming mystery" and "miracle," having a specific reference to his own incarnation, so that thereby we are made "members of the body of our incarnate Lord," even as he was made partaker of our humanity by the power of the Spirit in the Virgin's womb,* then was the Lord indeed setting forth new truth, of which it was not strange that Nicodemus should be ignorant, which, until now, it was impossible for him to know, and the reproof of the Master was not deserved.

2. The analogies of Christian truth create a presumption against the interpretation of these words which we oppose. The change re-

* "Tracts for the Times," vol. ii. p. 43.

quisite to salvation is, in its real nature, a moral and spiritual change. Whatever means may be used to symbolize or to effect it, it is agreed that the change itself is a change in the judgments, desires, and volitions of the soul itself. The very nature of this change admits for its accomplishment only a spiritual agent, the Holy Ghost; and a spiritual instrumentality, divine truth. The washing of the body with water can, in the very nature of things, have nothing to do with producing a moral change in the soul. And the principles of the divine government, under the remedial dispensation, require that the Spirit and the truth be left free—not tied to any ceremonial observance, but free to work their blessed effects in the human soul under all circumstances and even in the very hour and article of death. The solitary traveller breathing his last among pagans in a heathen land; the explorer perishing on the burning sands of the desert; the soldier dying untended on the field of battle, though he call to mind the teachings of his youth and the words of the blessed Evangel, cannot, on this view, turn to God and be saved, unless he can find water and priestly, or at least Christian, hands to administer it to him, because, forsooth, this text ties the work of regeneration to the ordinance and the moment of baptism. The sentiment which excludes unbaptized persons—even infants—from burial in the ground where the dust of the Christian dead reposes, is a not unnatural inference from this doctrine.

3. The change of the new birth which is here spoken of is elsewhere in Scripture constantly ascribed to the instrumentality of the word alone, without reference to baptism: "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth. . . . Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."* "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, . . . see that ye love one another, . . . being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, even the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."† If the truth, revealed in the word and wielded by the Spirit, is the only instrument of regeneration, it is easy to understand an allusion in some passages, as in this from John, to the washing with water, which symbolizes the Spirit's work. But if the washing with water be an inseparable and indispensable instrumentality in our regeneration, it is impossible to understand those passages—and they are a great multitude—from which all allusion to it is omitted.

4. The "kingdom of God," mentioned in the text under consideration, has two forms of existence, one visible and on the earth, the other invisible and spiritual. The baptism with water is the appointed door of entrance into the one; regeneration by the Spirit is the door of entrance into the other. Without baptism by water a man cannot become a member of the visible Church; without the baptism of the Spirit he cannot enter the spiritual and invisible kingdom. Of this spiritual renovation, water-baptism is a symbol or type; and of this twofold form of his kingdom and twofold condition of admission the

* James i. 18, 21.

† 1 Pet. i. 22, 23.

Master says—in words whose luminous simplicity rebukes the mystical perversion which they have suffered at the hands of some of his disciples—“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

5. This interpretation will not abide the test of Christian experience. Baptism does not, in point of fact, mark the line between the old life and the new. The fruits of the Spirit—repentance and faith toward God—are found and are sought for before baptism, and application to receive this ordinance is evidence—in many cases most conspicuous and decisive evidence—of a change of heart; evidence than which no better can be furnished after baptism. So, too, the sense of pardon, consciousness of God's love, and joy in the Holy Ghost—all the inward testimonies of the Spirit that we are the children of God—are enjoyed by multitudes of God's people before as well as after the reception of this rite. On the other hand, it cannot be claimed that all those who have been baptized, either in infancy or in adult years, have been regenerated. An infant thus renewed ought, as soon as it can perceive truth, to display a love for divine things, delight in the knowledge of God and a cheerful readiness to do his will, not needing, with diligent instruction and solicitous reproof and painful discipline, to be brought afterward under the power of the truth. Whether this be the uniform effect of the administration of this ordinance we cheerfully leave to the decision of those who have opportunity to judge.

II. There is another view of the meaning of baptism which, especially in view of an inference which is drawn from it as to the mode of its administration, demands attention. It is the view of those who maintain that the ordinance of Christian baptism is expressive not only of cleansing, but of burial and resurrection. “There is something in baptism that is calculated to be an emblem of a resurrection as well as of a burial.”* Upon this view, I remark:

1. It confuses the symbolical significance of the rite, and destroys its simplicity and expressiveness. It teaches that at least three distinct ideas—in the hands of some expositors even more—are embodied and set forth in this ceremony: (1) Cleansing; (2) Burial; (3) Resurrection. This is in violation of one of the prime requirements in such symbol, that it have unity and simplicity. Practically it is found, moreover, that the popular apprehension, and even the pulpit expositions of the ordinance in the churches where this view is taught, tend powerfully to simplify its meaning by dropping out of sight the idea of cleansing, and giving exclusive prominence to the two cognate ideas of burial and resurrection. The sermons, hymns and prayers in connection with the administration of baptism in these churches bear ample witness to this fact. Furthermore, washing with water is symbolical of a spiritual *fact*; the removal of our sinfulness and the renovation of our spiritual nature by the power of the Holy Ghost.

* Carson on “Baptism,” p. 144. London ed.

But "burial in baptism" is symbolical, not of a fact, but of a purely figurative or emblematic thought, viz.: that in the hour of the new birth we die and rise again to newness of life. But that is only a figure of speech. There is no proper and literal sense in which we die with Christ and are raised again. This view, therefore, confuses the meaning of the ordinance, not only by multiplying the ideas of which it is the expression, but by making it partly the symbol of a symbol, partly the symbol of a fact.

2. Burial was no part of the meaning of the manifold washings of the Old Testament, though its advocates zealously maintain that they were performed by immersion, or submersion.

3. This view has no support in the baptism of John, though the same teachers maintain strenuously the substantial identity of John's baptism with Christian baptism.

4. The idea of burial did not attach to baptism as administered by Christ and his disciples, for the burial and resurrection of the Lord himself—the historical facts on which this interpretation is based—had not yet taken place.

5. This view is not warranted by any words of Christ in reference to this ordinance. His silence on this point is natural, if the original and simple meaning of washing with water, with which the church had so long been familiar, was to be retained; but this silence is not intelligible, if our Lord was instituting a service, the chief part of whose meaning was wholly new. See how fully he expounds the meaning of the other sacrament—the Lord's Supper!

6. The whole support of this view is found in two passages of Paul, so nearly identical that they are practically one passage: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans vi. 3, 4; also, Colossians ii. 12. On these verses I remark simply: (1.) They are susceptible of a natural and entirely reasonable interpretation, consistently with the view which regards baptism as the symbol of spiritual cleansing. The change of regeneration, elsewhere likened to a new birth, to a new creation, and to a resurrection from the dead, is, in a true and important sense, a dying to our former life, occupations and associations, and a rising to newness of life. Death, ravishing us away from this present world and bearing to the scenes of another life, is not a greater change than that which passes upon regenerate children of God. This work of the Spirit is symbolized by baptism. The grace which is thus conveyed to us is the fruit of the death of Christ. Therefore, by a true and most impressive figure, we are said in our baptism to be baptized into the death of Christ, and to rise to a new life. The view which regards the apostle as speaking of the spiritual significance of baptism, rather than as alluding to the mode of its administration, is, exegetically, at least as sound and defensible as the other. These verses,

then, being entirely capable of this interpretation, cannot be pressed into the service of the other. Yet they are the only scriptural support for the view which regards baptism as symbolical of burial and resurrection. (2.) That stress is to be laid upon the spiritual meaning, not upon the figurative allusion in these verses, is evident from the fact that in the next verse the figure changes again: "If we have been *planted* together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Rom. vi. 5. If the previous verses determine burial and resurrection to be part of the significance of baptism, this verse requires us to add to its manifold significations the further ideas of the planting and springing of the seed. From such complications we find relief only by adhering to the original, fundamental and simple meaning of the rite.

Concerning the mode of baptism, I say nothing further than is involved in the foregoing observations as to its meaning, and pass on to consider

THE PROPER SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

The following proposition commands the assent of all Christians: "Baptism is to be administered to all those who profess their faith in Christ and their obedience to him." But the further proposition of the Westminster standards, that "the children of those who are members of the visible Church are to be baptized," is strenuously denied by a large body of our fellow-Christians. The truth of that proposition rests on the following considerations:

1. The children of believing parents stand, by virtue of that fact, in a special relation to God. God is the God of families, as well as of individuals. He clothes parents with their authority; he requires families to worship him; he has made special promises to families which believe and obey him, and "pours out his fury upon the families which call not on his name." These promises, coupled with these conditions, are of the nature of a covenant, so that we can properly say that Christian families, as such, are in covenant with God. An interesting analogy lies at hand in the relation of nations to God. No small part of the Scriptures is occupied with the revelation of the principles of God's moral government over these larger societies. They are subject to his law, capable of obedience and of rebellion, rewarded and punished, pardoned when penitent, and destroyed when incorrigible, like any other subjects of his sway. Religion is therefore inseparable from national life, if that life is to be righteous or secure, and nations which fear God and trust him are, in an important sense, in covenant with him. These social principles cannot be too earnestly contended for. They cannot be generally obscured or forgotten without social and public ruin. Over against them is the view which regards religion as a principle whose only sphere is the individual soul; a principle which takes on no social form or manifestation, except in the Christian Church. This view, when consistently held, denies the right of the nation and the family

alike to worship God. According to this view the members of a family may properly pray together, as individuals who lodge together for the night do well to unite in prayer, but not as an organic unity, standing in personal relation to God. According to this view the children of believing parents sustain no organic relation to God or to his Church different from that sustained by the children of the unconverted. With the word of God in our hand it ought not to be difficult to determine which of these aspects of human society is the divine aspect. God's covenant with Abraham was "with him and his seed after him." The severest charge against Israel which Ezekiel was commissioned to utter was this: "Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters whom thou *hast borne unto me*, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them. . . . Thou hast slain *my* children." Ezekiel xvi. 20, 21. Take now these facts and principles: Christian families as families are in covenant with God; God claims the children in such families as his children; the family is, practically, whatever may be our theories, the unit of organization in the Church as in the commonwealth, lying as it does at the foundation of them both. These principles furnish strong *a priori* or presumptive evidence that the children of believing parents are to be acknowledged as members of the Christian Church.

2. Children were members of the Church during the Old Testament. The covenant with Abraham, by which he and his posterity were constituted a visible society with definite relations to God, expressly included his seed, and the seal of membership in that society—circumcision—was impressed thenceforward upon his infant children. Here there is no question. But it is denied that the Abrahamic society was a Church at all; and it is further denied that the New Testament is historically the same organization with which that covenant was made. The people of God under the Old Testament, it is said, were not a Church, but only a nation, under a peculiar and exceptional religious constitution. It is true they were a nation; but that there was also a true Church enfolded within the national organization, yet distinct from it, is evident from the fact that citizenship in the nation did not carry with it admission to all religious privileges. These privileges were forfeited by many causes which did not work exclusion from the pale of the commonwealth. The provision, "that soul shall be cut off from the people," as annexed to certain moral and ceremonial offences, did not mean either banishment or death, but exclusion from the congregation of the Lord and the courts of the tabernacle.

If the people of God, moreover, were not a Church, and the true Church, how shall we understand the promises of world-wide enlargement and unprecedented prosperity which were made to them? It was declared to them, in their organic or corporate character, "Thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. . . . O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted! Behold, I

will lay thy stones with fair colors and thy foundations with sapphires. . . . The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee. The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet, and they shall call thee The City of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah liv. lx. If these promises were made to the nation, they can only be fulfilled by the universal expansion of that national organization until it fills the earth and includes the whole human family. And by the same argument the *identity* of the New Testament Church with the Church of the Old Testament dispensation is put beyond question. If these glorious promises of universal enlargement and unparalleled prosperity were made to an organization whose existence terminated with the introduction of the new dispensation, when were they fulfilled? How can they ever be fulfilled? How can the New Testament Church be the heir to this inheritance, if no organic identity subsists between her and the people of God in former days? What becomes of the covenant with Abraham: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed;" and of Paul's declaration, "If ye be Christ's, ye are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise?" Therefore we conclude that the Church as a visible society is one under both dispensations, and her children, therefore, were expressly recognized as members, for a period of two thousand years.

3. No change in the constitution of the Church, ordaining the exclusion of children, was announced by Christ. We are justified in asking for the record of a change so fundamental and far-reaching in the very structure of the covenant society. It is incredible, moreover, that such a change was received with silent acquiescence by all the adherents of the new economy; that a change so vital should have left no trace of the discussions or the conflicts to which it must have given rise. Can we suppose that the discontinuance of circumcision leaves so broad a mark upon the pages of Paul's epistles, and that the exclusion of the children of all subsequent generations of believers, through the whole period of childhood, from the pale of the visible, left none at all? The silence of the New Testament Scriptures respecting infant baptism is a matter of small moment. The fundamental question is, Are our children with us members of the visible Church? That they were so recognized by the apostles, in the absence of any record to the contrary, is as certainly to be believed as that missionaries sent out by a Presbyterian church, knowing the constitution and law of their church on this subject, would receive the children of believers into the churches they would form, or that missionaries from Baptist churches would exclude them.

4. The historical proof that infants have been commonly admitted to baptism in all ages of the Christian Church scarcely admits of the

brief citation which alone is possible here. A council of sixty-six bishops or pastors, at Carthage, in the year 253 after Christ, expressly decided that it was not necessary to postpone the baptism of infants till the eighth day after birth, as some, following the law of circumcision, maintained. Augustine, in his controversy with Pelagius, asks why infants are baptized if they have no sin; and Pelagius resents, as a slander, the imputation that he discountenanced the baptism of infants. The Waldenses, who, through the dark ages, maintained in so great purity the true religion, administered the seal of baptism to infants. Of this fact, their confessions and the records of their historians leave no doubt. The baptism of the infant children of believers has been the general custom of the Church of Christ, with rare exceptions, from the apostolic period to the present day. Children have been members of every form of social organization which God has ever instituted among men. They are citizens in the commonwealth. Let a babe be ravished from its cradle by a foreign power, and all the forces of the nation move for its recovery as promptly as for the proudest statesman in her council chambers. Children trod the path of Old Testament history with patriarchs and prophets, members like them of the Church of the living God. We have reason to believe that a great majority of the inhabitants of heaven are, and to all eternity will be, children; that the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem will be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

A babe in heaven is a babe forever.
 Babes, though part
 Of the true archetypal house of God
 Built on the heavenly Zion, are not now
 Nor will be ever, massive rocks rough-hewn,
 Or ponderous corner-stones, or fluted shafts
 Of columns, or far-shadowing pinnacles,
 But rather as the delicate lily-work
 By Hiram wrought for Solomon of old,
 Enwreathed upon the brazen chapiters,
 Or flowers of lilies round the molten sea.

The only organization, not of a purely human character, in heaven or on earth, from which infants are sought to be excluded, are those Christian churches which do not recognize them as members. The attempt does not succeed. The mistaken views of men cannot alter the truth or subvert the arrangements of God. These brethren can no more keep children out of their churches than they can out of their homes. They may refuse to enroll their names in their books, and withhold from them the seal of the covenant, but their children are BORN in the Church, and their membership is not made void, nor are the blessings connected with it prevented, by the temporary obscuration of this important truth.

If the line of argument we have followed is the true support of Infant Baptism, it yields the unavoidable inference that only the children of *believing* parents are to be baptized. The indiscriminate

administration of baptism to all infants for whom it is desired disregards the only grounds on which infants have the right to be baptized at all.

The REV. PROF. JONATHAN EDWARDS, D. D., LL. D., of Danville, Ky., read the following on

CHURCH DISCIPLINE: ITS PROVINCE AND USE.

In the following paper a few remarks will be offered to the Council on the subject of Church Discipline: its Province and its Use. The statements will be general, with but little discussion of particular points or questions.

At the outset a few explications—mere truisms, indeed—may be allowed by way of definition.

Discipline, in general, is the practical application of law. Law is here considered in its relation to individuals—not classes nor masses—and may include order and instruction.

Discipline pertains to a state of pupilage. Whoever is in any sense a disciple is amenable to discipline.

Discipline presupposes government; that is, an acknowledged supremacy, regal or popular, as the case may be, and derives from it both its dignity and its type. It is one of the functions of government, representing, however, not so much its majesty as its mercy.

In its relation to law, discipline indicates, not the penalty, but the educating power and righteousness of the precept. Its stringency is not punitive but corrective and preventive. Even excommunication, as Calvin says, is not anathema.

Government without discipline, if this be conceivable, is majesty only in name, a mere vamping pretense without assimilative or executive force, and without the power to do good.

Law, apart from discipline, if this be conceivable, is theory without practice, advice without urgency or illustration.

Discipline without government is plastic force without a model; without law it is tyranny and unreasonable caprice.

Thus government, law, and discipline are inseparable. They imply each other. Their interests are common. Whatever interferes with the due exercise of discipline militates against the dignity and the beneficence of both government and law. Whoever undervalues, neglects, or is recreant to discipline is in so far injurious to government and law, and unfaithful to the obligations of good citizenship. Discipline is the duty and the hope of all who would enjoy the benefits of society and of instruction.

Discipline is of necessity inherent in every association or organization authorized among men, especially those which exist by divine warrant, viz.: the Family, the State, and the Church. In each of these great institutions the ends sought to be attained are substantially the same, viz.: unity, assimilation, and peace. To each, discipline is a law of very life; without it each would lose its value, even if, for