

membership may be drawn from the silence of Jewish converts, and Judaizing teachers, who opposed the Apostles.

I. The silence of the Jewish converts. Under the Jewish dispensation, parents and children were both members of the Church. If under the Christian dispensation, the children had been excluded by the Apostles, as disqualified in any way from being recognized as members; would it not have prejudiced the parents against the new dispensation? Would we not have heard some objections on this point? While the parent was baptized, and continued in the Church, his children were excommunicated. After the institution of baptism as a seal, circumcision was discontinued. When the parent makes a profession of his faith in Christ, he renounces all confidence in Jewish rites and ceremonies. He no longer worships God in this manner. He now belongs to the Church under a new form. Unless then, his children are entitled to Church membership, and receive the seal of baptism, they cease to be members. Where then are the superior privileges which as a parent he enjoys, as he was promised under the new dispensation? Is he not deprived of one of the most precious privileges, one that was calculated to afford him great comfort—the privilege of having his children in the Church as well as himself? The Jewish fathers enter the Church, but their beloved children are rejected. Those formerly aliens, are admitted; but the children, once in, are henceforth to be considered "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise." Now, let any candid person reflect on the effect which all this would inevitably have had on the mind of a Jewish parent. Would it not have been an obstacle to his conversion? Would such an important change so deeply affecting the interests of families, have been passed by in silence, without calling forth some explanations from the Apostles to satisfy these converts? And if such explanations had been given, would they not have been recorded in the New Testament? But not the slightest hint is to be found recorded on the subject, that their children were to wait till they became adults, before they could be publicly acknowledged as members of the Church. So far from this; we find the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, advancing the very same sentiments that had ever been advanced by the prophets of old, shewing that there was no change in regard to infant membership under the new dispensation. "The promise is to

you and to your children," Acts. ii. 39. The silence of these Jewish converts can be accounted for, only on the supposition that they saw their offspring in the enjoyment of the same Church relationship under the new dispensation, as under the old.

II. The silence of the Judaizing teachers. We know well that these men were opposed to every change in relation to the Church; because they imagined that the Mosaic ordinances and customs were essential to salvation. They contended for circumcision, and entered into the churches established by the Apostles, and used every argument to draw away the converts from the true way of salvation. Now, is it likely that they would have allowed such an opportunity of appealing to the natural affections of these converts in behalf of their children, to pass without any controversy, provided they had been excluded from the Church? Would such a radical innovation not lead to keen disputes? And would we not have the Apostles' vindication of such a change, provided such had taken place? But here again the New Testament is silent on the point; which silence, can be accounted for only on the fact, that the Judaizing teachers as well as the Jewish converts, knew that, though there were changes on other points, there had no change taken place, affecting the relations of infants to the Church.

From these considerations it does appear to be God's good pleasure to receive under the broad canopy of His covenant, not only the fathers and mothers professing faith in Christ, but all the members of their families, over whom they have control. The call of the Gospel is similar to that addressed to Noah, "come thou and all thy house into the ark, GEN. vi. 7.

Infants then being members of Christ's Church, are to be baptized. They are lambs in the one great flock, whose shepherd is Christ. He claims them as His, "Feed my lambs." Those therefore who withhold from them baptism; destroy their title to the blessings of the covenant and they would do well to consider the words of God to Abraham. "And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant, GEN. xvii. 14.

Gracious Saviour, Holy Shepherd,

Little ones are dear to thee;  
Gathered with thine arms, and carried  
In thy bosom, may they be,  
Sweetly, fondly, safely tended,  
From all want and danger free.