

no one questioned youthful baptism, and in which I could not remain if I did so, there was really nothing to impel me to investigation. Still I have thought upon the subject and there are considerations which lead me to think it more in accordance with the Holy Writ to admit the children of believers than to restrict the ordinance to converted persons. These considerations will endeavour to put before you. First, then, I conclude that *as the church has existed from the days of Abraham, and as infants were for a long period in it by Divine appointment, that therefore they should be in it now.*"

"Certainly, certainly!" said Mr Maitland. "Perfectly reasonable, unless, indeed, you find a Bible command for turning them out."

"Let us look at it calmly," interposed Mr. Bell. "In the first place, Sir, your major premise is merely assumption. The Bible nowhere teaches that the church was in existence in the days of Abraham. Will you tell us what you understand by the phrase, *the church*?"

"I understand by *the church*," responded Mr. C. "a people separated from the world for the service of God, having divinely-appointed ordinances, including some rite or mark by which its members are known. The Jews were a body of people thus separated and they had such ordinances and distinctive mark of membership."

Mr. Vapid thought that "Mr. Maitland might be supplied with authority for 'turning them out,' as Paul to the Galatians, in allusion to the Old Covenant and those under it, commands that we 'cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.'" Of this casting out of the children of the flesh the exclusion of Agar and her son is an allegory. It is thus clear that if infants, by virtue of their fleshly relation, were in the Jewish church, they were excluded under this dispensation because the flesh profits nothing, a new creature in Christ Jesus being the only subject. And this is further intimated in connection with the two covenants—the Old and the New. During the continuance of the Old Covenant God promised to make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and those covenants are represented as differing in a most important particular. Under the Old Covenant, which embraced Abraham's seed according to the flesh without regard to age or faith, it was necessary for adults who knew the Lord to teach the young to know him—that is, the children who with themselves were under that covenant. But under the New Covenant it is specially stated that all would know him—that is, not the whole world, but all who are under the covenant. They were not to say, "Know ye the Lord, for all shall know him, from the least unto the greatest." This could not be the case were infants in the church or parties to the covenant, for then, as under the former covenant, we should have to teach, the very thing which the Lord declares there shall be no need to teach. All, then, who are born, not of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God—of "water and the Spirit"—all such and none other, are proper

subjects for the church, and only such are under the New Covenant."

"What, in the name of common sense, are we coming to now?" exclaimed Mr. Maitland. "Infants are not to be taught to know the Lord; Pray at what age will you teach them the way of salvation? When they are twenty-one, or after they are married, or when?"

"Our good friend," continued Mr Vapid, "is quite amusing. I have said nothing against preaching the gospel to the young. Do it by all means as they can understand it. Early hearing of the Gospel and witnessing its blessed fruit, are among the blessings peculiar to the children of Christian parents. Preach the gospel to them—teach them to know the Lord. Do the same to unbelieving adults—but then, neither the one nor the other are under the New Covenant. You preach the gospel to them in order to bring them into that relation and not because they are already in it—to make them Christians and not because they are Christians."

"Let me ask your attention," resumed Mr. Bell, addressing Mr. Clearthought. "Admitting all that Mr Vapid has advanced then the question is considered in the light of the covenants, we come to another matter in dealing with your argument. You really assume that the Jewish nation and the church of Christ are one and the same. If not, your entire assumption falls to the ground. The moment you look at what is called the Jewish church as distinct from the Christian church your proposition dissolves. If the churches are *two*, then it does not follow that the conditions of membership are the same in each. Then, the sense in which you use the word *church* is not admissible. You say 'a body of people separated from the world,' and that 'the Jewish people were such a body.' It is true that the church of Christ is separated from the world, but separated in a sense that will not apply to the Jews. As a nation they were separated from other nations, but they were still of the world—not born again—whereas the church is not of the world. They had divinely appointed ordinances and so has the church, but the ordinances are not the same—those of the one are most unlike those of the other. But this is not all. You start with a mere assumption. The church has not existed from the days of Abraham. There really never was a Jewish church. A church called out from the nations and not of the world, and an entire nation chosen for certain positions and blessings, are ideas so widely different that a careful observer would not for a moment confound them. The Jews had a religion but never were a Jewish church."

Mr. Maitland begged to differ. "The Apostle speaks of the church in the wilderness, and had there been no church at that time he could not have done so."

"Granting," replied Mr. Bell, "that an Apostle applied the term to the people in the wilderness, would that prove that God had then a church, in the sense in which the word is generally used by Jesus and the Apostles? If so, then was that Ephesian mob which worship-