

the things which were spoken of Paul," and that she was therefore "baptized and her house." From this house no one has the least authority to exclude children, even young children, since there is nothing in the history to warrant the above mentioned conjectures, and the word is in Scripture used expressly to include them. All is perfectly gratuitous on the part of the Baptists; but, while there is nothing to sanction the manner in which they deal with this text, there is a circumstance strongly confirmatory of the probability that the house of Lydia, according to the natural import of the word rendered house or family, contained children, and that in an infantile state. This is, that in all the other instances in which adults are mentioned as having been baptized along with the head of a family, they are mentioned as "hearing," and "believing," or in some terms which amount to this. Cornelius had called together "his kinsmen and near friends;" and while Peter spoke, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word," "and he commanded them to be baptized." So the adults in the house of the jailer at Philippi were persons to whom the word of "the Lord" was spoken; and although nothing is said of the faith of any but the jailer himself,—for the words are more properly rendered, "and he, believing God, rejoiced with all his house,"—yet is the joy which appears to have been felt by the adult part of his house, as well as by himself, to be attributed to their faith. Now, as it does not appear that the Apostles, although they baptized infant children, baptized unbelieving adult servants, because their masters or mistresses believed, and yet the house of Lydia were baptized along with herself, when no mention at all is made of our Lord "opening the heart" of the adult domestics, nor of their believing, the fair inference is, that "the house" of Lydia means her children only, and that being of immature years they were baptized with their mother according to the common custom of the Jews, to baptize the children of proselyted Gentiles along with their parents, from which practice Christian baptism appears to have been taken.

The third instance is that of "the house of Stephanas," mentioned by St. Paul, 1 Cor. i. 16, as having been baptized by himself. This family also, it is argued, must have been all adults, because they are said in the same epistle, chap. xvi. 15, to have "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," and farther, because they were persons who took "a lead" in the affairs of the church, the Corinthians being exhorted to "submit themselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth." To understand this passage rightly, it is, however, necessary to observe that Stephanas, the head of this family, had been sent by the church of Corinth to St. Paul at Ephesus, along with Fortunatus and Achaicus. In the absence of the head of the family, the Apostle commands "the house," the family of Stephanas, to the regard of the Corinthian believers, and perhaps also the houses of the two other brethren who had come with him; for in several MSS. marked by Griesbach, and in some of the versions, the text reads, "Ye know the house of Stephanas and Fortunatus," and one reads also "and of Achaicus." By the house or family of Stephanas, the Apostle must mean his children, or, along with them, his near relations dwelling together in the same family; for, since they are commended for their hospitality to the saints, servants, who have no power to show hospitality, are of course excluded. But, in the absence of the head of the family, it is very improbable that the Apostle should exhort the Corinthian Church to "submit," ecclesiastically, to the wife, sons, daughters, and near relations of Stephanas, and, if Griesbach's MSS. be followed, to the family of Fortunatus, and that of Achaicus also. In respect of government, therefore, they cannot be supposed "to have

had a lead in the church," according to the Baptist notion, and especially as the heads of these families were absent. They were however the oldest Christians in Corinth, the house of Stephanas at least being called "the first fruits of Achaia," and eminently distinguished for "addicting themselves," setting themselves on system, to the work of ministering to the saints, that is, of communicating to the poor saints; entertaining stranger Christians, which was an important branch of practical duty in the primitive church, that in every place those who professed Christ might be kept out of the society of idolaters; and receiving the ministers of Christ. On these accounts the Apostle commands them to the special regard of the Corinthian Church, and exhorts "that you range yourselves under and co-operate with them, and with every one," also, "who helpeth with us, and laboureth;" the military metaphor continued in the preceding verse being here carried forward. These families were the oldest Christians in Corinth; and as they were foremost in every good word and work, they were not only to be commended, but the rest were to be exhorted to serve under them as leaders in these works of charity. This appears to be the obvious sense of this otherwise obscure passage. But in this, or indeed in any other sense which can be given to it, it proves no more than that there were adult persons in the family of Stephanas, his wife, and sons, and daughters, who were distinguished for their charity and hospitality. Still it is to be remembered that the baptism of the oldest of the children took place several years before. The house of Stephanas "was the first fruits of Achaia," in which St. Paul began to preach not later than A. D. 51, while this epistle could not be written earlier than A. D. 57, and might be later. Six or eight years taken from the age of the sons and daughters of Stephanas might bring the oldest to the state of early youth, and as to the younger branches would descend to the term of infancy, properly so called. Still farther, all that the Apostle affirms of the leniency and hospitality of the family of Stephanas is perfectly consistent with a part of his children being still very young when he wrote the epistle. An equal commendation for hospitality and charity might be given in the present day, with perfect propriety in many pious families, several members of which are still in a state of infancy. It was sufficient to warrant the use of such expressions as those of the Apostle, that there were in these Corinthian families a few adults whose conduct gave a decided character to the whole "house." Thus the arguments used to prove that in these three instances of family baptism there were no children, are evidently very unsatisfactory; and they lead us to the conclusion, which perhaps all would come to in reading the sacred history were they quite free the bias of theory, that "houses" or "families," as in the commonly received import of the term, must be understood to comprise children of all ages, unless some explicit note of the contrary appears, which is not the case in any of the instances in question.

5. The last argument may be drawn from the antiquity of the practice of infant baptism.

If the baptism of the infant children of believers was not practised by the Apostles and by the primitive churches, when and where did the practice commence? To this question the Baptist writers can give no answer. It is an innovation, according to them, not upon the circumstances of a sacrament, but upon its essential principle; and yet its introduction produced no struggle; was never noticed by any general or provincial council; and excited no controversy? This itself is strong presumptive proof of its early antiquity. On the other hand, we can point out the only ancient writer who opposed infant baptism. This was Tertullian, who lived late in the second century; but this very opposition to

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Dear Brother,
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HENRY POPE.

ACTS, AND MODE BAPTISM.

page 350.)

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