

whether the children were to be admitted and receive the seal? No. On the same principle we must believe, that when they succeeded in making disciples, and baptized them, that they administered the seal to their children at the same time. True, according to their Jewish notions, we might expect to find them baptizing none but males, were it not that we are informed, that the rite was administered to females also. In Acts VIII. 12, it is said "they were baptized both men and women."

2. Infant Church membership was recognized by Paul. In his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians he says, "And the women which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him, For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean, but now are they holy, 1 Cor. 13-24.

The first thing to do, is to ascertain the meaning of the word "holy," which is here set opposite "unclean." In the New Testament it frequently denotes separation from a common to a sacred use. In this sense it is used in reference to places, temples, and men. When applied to men, it signifies their separation from the world to the service of God. It is evident that the holiness of the children in this sense, was a fact acknowledged by the Corinthian Church, and the Apostle here brings it forward as a reason why the parents should not separate; because, the condition of their children threw a certain degree of sacredness around the unbelieving parent, in consequence of his, or her, connexion with a believer. The reason of the Apostle is based on the acknowledged fact, that the children of such a family were holy. The whole of the members of the Jewish Church were called holy, because God had entered into covenant with them, and their children were called holy, because they also were in covenant, and received the same seal, *circumcision*.

When therefore Paul addressed these words to the Corinthian Church, he meant that the children of believers were holy; not in *fact*, but in a *Church* sense: as belonging nominally to the people of God, as members of the visible Church. It is on this principle that Presbyterians baptize a child, when only *one* of the parents is a professing Christian.

3. The practice of the Apostles shews that they regarded infants as members of the Church.

Acting under their great commission to go and "disciple all nations;" they went forth to found and establish Churches, by making proselytes. Their course shews that they never baptized any adult, but upon a profession of faith in Christ. They never mention infants; just, because, the principle was established, that when the parent was received into the Church, the children were received likewise. The form of the seal having been changed could not in any way affect the subjects of it, or the blessings sealed. In looking at the history of their proceedings, we find them speaking of "baptizing" just as "circumcising" is spoken of, viz: "households." What was the direction given to Abraham? "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant, GEN. XVII. 12-13: Now, compare with this command the doings of Paul in the city of Philippi, when Lydia was converted, "he baptized her and her household," Acts. xvi. 15. In like manner he baptized the jailor "and all his straightway." But it may be said, "we have no evidence that in these houses there were any children." Those who urge that objection, would soon shift their ground, if, in proving any other point, they were told the word "household" did never include children. A "household" comprehends all the individuals living under the same roof, and subject to the same domestic government; and it certainly would be an unwarrantable use of the term, to limit it to the adults in a family. I cannot see how any unprejudiced person reading the doings of the Apostles, can come to any other conclusion. These cases were not the only cases in which they acted so; but are mentioned as specimens of their mode of procedure; and it would be truly marvellous, if, in all the families of the early converts, there were no children. The man who can believe that has more than common faith. The want of children is not what is common in families; but the exception to the rule. It seems clear then, that the Apostles did baptize infants; which they would not have done, had they not viewed them as members of Christ's Church, and entitled to the seals of the covenant.

4. A strong presumptive argument in support of the doctrine of infant Church