

covenant of Grace, presents to us a constant progress. Benefits and blessings once granted have never been withdrawn. There has been no repealing of any thing essential. The new dispensation effected no organic change; it is merely the completing of the system,—it is the bringing into act the shadowings of the ancient economy—it is the unfolding of the whole mystery which was but dimly seen by former generations. Every thing essential to the covenant of grace is now the same as before.

There is reason to believe that many, when they speak of the Old Testament dispensation, are thinking of the ceremonial institutions of Moses. These ceremonial institutions, however, were no necessary part of the dispensation which began with Abraham. The dispensation of grace existed for centuries before the days of Moses, and it has existed for many centuries after his laws have all been abrogated. The ceremonial institutions of Moses formed a special code for a particular people, to serve an important but temporary object. They were a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ; and when Christ came, the whole system fell to the ground. But the covenant made with Abraham being an everlasting covenant remained, and not only remained but was carried forward to the point at which it aimed,—the blessing of the families of the earth in Christ Jesus.

Circumcision did not belong to the Mosaic dispensation. It belonged to the Abrahamic covenant. It was a token of the covenant which God made with Abraham, and he received it as a seal of the righteousness of faith. It was an institution connected with that covenant. It "was not of Moses, but of the fathers." John 7: 22.

Now the covenant with Abraham runs thus, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee." "The promise was to him and his seed." It is on this ground that the offspring of the children of believing Abraham are brought within the provisions of the covenant of grace. The covenant with Abraham still exists. Children under it are recognized as belonging to the Church of God. It was remarked above, that the making of the Covenant with Abraham was a step in advance of all that existed previously, and also, that whatever is granted by God under that covenant is never repealed. The covenant exists and the right of the offspring of believers to the privileges granted by that covenant still remains. Nothing short of an express revelation from heaven will suffice to take from them what God distinctly and freely gave to them.

It is further to be remarked, that every great step in the development of the purposes of grace, has had its appropriate tokens or seals; and to suppose that the richest and fullest of all the dispensations of grace is without any such is to suppose a solecism in the most perfect of all the works of God. The end to which all this leads, is that baptism corresponds to circumcision. They are both seals of the same covenant—they symbolize the same truths, and they are administered to the same subjects.