

that *God is unchangeable* ; and that the token of the covenant accorded to the infant Jews, is not denied to the children of Christians ; and it was with this assurance that St. Peter, when persuading the multitude to Baptism, appeals to this privilege—“ *Ye are the children of the covenant which God made with our fathers.*”\* Of what covenant did he then speak ? Was it not the same which God made to Abraham, of which all the children of Abraham received the seal on the eighth day, and of which holy Baptism is now the sign ? If there could be any doubt upon this subject, it is removed by the arguments of St. Paul, where he speaks of the Church under the figure of an olive tree, of which Christianity is the *graft*, and tells his converts that they shared all the privileges of the covenant made with Abraham—privileges which he compares to “ *the root and fatness of the olive tree.*”† And to make the affinity still more close and clear, we have only to read the third chapter to the Galatians, where he distinctly asserts that the Gospel was preached unto Abraham,‡ and that it is one and the same covenant. “ *Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham. . . . For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus ; AND IF YE BE CHRIST’S, THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM’S SEED AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE.*”§

No words can be plainer, and they teach us that the Gospel was not to contract but to expand the free mercies of God—not to limit but to extend the blessings of the covenant. They had *never* been confined to infancy or to age—but now every obstruction was to be removed. The covenant had been restricted to Jews, but now the Gentiles were to be admitted. The token of the covenant had been given only to males, but now females were to receive it also ; all were to be one in Christ Jesus ; and

\* Acts iii. 25.

† Rom. xi. 17.

‡ 8th verse.

§ Gal. iii. 26, *et seq.* It is true that the Gospel is called, by St. Paul, “ *a new covenant,*” but we must not make him so contradict all those other passages in which he speaks of it being one and the same with the Abrahamic covenant. It was new, in the same sense in which the commandment to “ *love one another*” was a “ *new commandment.*” It was new, as being *that* in substance which the ancient covenant was in shadow, with a larger effusion of grace and richer promises of mercy. It was new, as removing all restrictions—as supplying every thing that was wanting—as revealing every thing that had been veiled and hidden—as embracing all who had been excluded, and making “ *all one in Christ Jesus*”—old and young, male and female, Jew and Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, without hindrance or distinction, “ *all one in Christ Jesus.*”