

This conclusion will receive additional confirmation if we look at the terms in which the Abrahamic covenant is expressed. Without referring to any prior communication of God to the Patriarch, we quote the words of Gen. xvii. 1. "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." Here we have, first, the covenant relation in which God, in great condescension and love, places himself toward His servant; and next, the corresponding duty which He requires of His servant. The few words that intimate the relation in which God places Himself to Abraham are pregnant with all those blessings which at subsequent developments of the covenant were more fully and specifically expressed. "I am to thee God Almighty—the inexhaustible, because infinite, repository of all needed blessings." "Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption," are all included. And in making over these blessings to his servant, God requires of him an entire consecration of heart, a perfect, i. e., a sincere, earnest and constant walk. Who does not recognize here the grand and essential features of the covenant of grace? Almighty sufficiency is still made over on the one hand, and evangelical obedience required on the other.

We pass by other texts which we would like to have noticed if space permitted, and observe that what is commonly called the Sinaitic covenant, or the covenant of peculiarity, made with the people and nation of Israel four hundred and thirty years afterward, did not and could not disannul this covenant. (See Gal. iii. 17.) By faith in the promised seed, in whom all nations were to be blessed, and by that alone, could men be justified, even under the Mosaic dispensation. But this dispensation, with the peculiarities of its ceremonial institutes, was chosen by God as the mode of administering the covenant best adapted to the existing condition and circumstances of the Church. We would refer the reader to a careful perusal of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians in this connection.

From time to time the substance of this covenant was republished to the Church. (See Deut. x, 13.) Jeremiah foretells a time when God will enter into "a new covenant" with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. (Jer. xxxi, 31—34.) And the Apostle Paul informs us, that it is under the Christian dispensation that this covenant, which he contrasts with the Sinaitic covenant, shall be entered into. But though both the Prophet and the Apostle speak of this latter-day covenant as "a new covenant," we find, upon examination, that it is new in respect not of its essence, but of its administration. It is substantially the covenant made with Abraham. It is the very covenant which God enters into with every believer. (2 Cor. vi, 16—18.) Its glorious and all comprehensive provision is, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," which includes all that is said about "the law of God being written upon their heart," "being merciful to their unrighteousness," &c.

From what has now been advanced, it is clear that the covenant made with Abraham was the covenant of grace. This is corroborated by the statements of the New Testament, that "it was confirmed of God in Christ,"—that believers as such are Abraham's seed—that he is the father of all that believe, clearly indicating his faith in God's promise made in the covenant of grace.

We have now to prove that as circumcision, the sign and seal of the covenant, was under the Old Testament administered to infants, who were thus recognized as within its bonds, so baptism, which under the New Testament occupies the same relation to the covenant of grace, and takes the place of the former ordinance, is to be administered upon the same principle, to the same class of individuals.

Circumcision is called by God (Gen. xvii, 11,) "a token of the covenant," that is, a sign, seal, or assurance on the one hand of the certainty of the blessings promised by God, and included in the words "*I will be a God unto thee, &c.,*"