

In verses 2nd and 3rd, He farther strengthens Moses' faith by calling his attention to His own glorious character, as revealed in His name Jehovah. This name was not entirely unknown to the patriarchs, as we may learn from Gen. xxii. 14, and elsewhere, but they had chiefly known Him by the name of El Shaddai—God Almighty. The word Jehovah signifies eternal, immutable self-existence, and unswerving truth and faithfulness. It is first used in Gen. ii. 4, the name previously employed having been Elohim, or the strong ones. Henry remarks that He is first called Jehovah when He had completed His great work; and so again He proclaims to Moses and His chosen people the same glorious appellation because He now begins to fulfil His promises. The patriarchs are said not to have known Him by this name, because they had never realized its full import, never having witnessed the fulfilment of the promises which had been made to them. The Jews considered this name so sacred that, in reading the Scriptures, they always, except in Num. vi. 21–27, substituted for it the name *Adonai*, also translated Lord.

In the succeeding verses of the lesson we have God's gracious purposes of love and mercy, primarily respecting the natural seed of Abraham, but, in their far more important meaning forming the precious heritage of all his spiritual seed to the end of time. Primarily they involve the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, their being put in possession of the land of Canaan, and their enjoyment of great national and social prosperity. God, in His providence, would watch over the nation, and load it with temporal blessings. In their higher spiritual bearing they imply the deliverance of every individual of our race who shall inherit Abraham's faith, from the bondage of sin and Satan, their support under all earthly trials, their victory over all their spiritual enemies, and their final introduction into that heavenly inheritance, of which Canaan was but a feeble type.

These purposes are presented in three aspects. First as a *Covenant*, or bargain between God and His people, binding each of them to the discharge of certain obligations. He engaged to be their God, and as such to save them from their enemies, to give them an inheritance, and all other needed blessings. They, on their part, were bound to be His people and as such to trust Him, to love Him, and to serve Him. This covenant had been first made with Abraham, and God now declares that He remembered it, not because it had ever been forgotten, but because the time had come when its provisions were to be fulfilled.

Secondly vv. 6, 7, as a *simple promise*. See Gal. iii. 6 to 13. They were not only to be His people, but God would *take them to Him* as His people. To this He bound Himself not only by a promise, but, also, v. 8, by an *oath*. See Heb. vi. 13–18.

Teachers should carefully read the 15th and 17th chapters of Genesis, in which they will find that the Abrahamic covenant was mainly spiritual in its character. They will see, also, that God instituted circumcision as a pledge on the part of His people, that they would love Him and serve Him. By that rite children when eight days old were introduced into the ancient church. Ought not the children, therefore, of these who by faith are spiritual seed of Abraham to be introduced by baptism into the Christian church. To avoid this difficulty Baptists maintain that the Abrahamic covenant referred only to temporal blessings, which is evidently an error.

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—The first plague—*Ex. vii. 14–22. Golden Text: Heb. iii. 15.* Par. passages—Deut. xv. 7, Job ix. 4, John xii. 40.

As this is the only lesson on the plagues inflicted upon Egypt, a few general remarks on them may not be inappropriate. Of all the ancient nations, the Egyptians had sunk into the most debasing idolatry; and though the Israelites had not quite lost the knowledge of their own God, they had learned to believe in and to worship the Egyptian gods. The grand object of Jehovah, in delivering them from their bondage to Pharaoh, was to vindicate his character, and establish their faith in Him as the only true God, to punish their cruel oppressors, and to do this in such a way as to pour contempt on the false deities of Egypt, (see Num. xxxiii. 4) and to impress both nations with the conviction of His Almighty power and majesty. In the first two plagues the river Nile, which received a higher degree of religious homage from the Egyptians than any other of their gods, was made an instrument of punishment by being turned into blood, and by being caused to produce millions of frogs. The lice created in the third, prevented them from worshipping any of their gods; for these insects were regarded as so polluting that the priests even shaved off their hair lest they should introduce any of them into their temples. The fourth plague was aimed against the worship of Beelzebub, the god of flies, on whom the Egyptians depended for protection from the swarms of ravenous flies by which the country was sometimes infested. The fifth which de-