

**Jehovah's Promise to Israel.**

[Them who by faith and patience inherit the promises. Heb. VI-12]

For the TORCH OF REASON:—In this age of reason, to blindly accept any person's assertions without due investigation is to court confusion and retard if not pervert the cause of truth. If the book called the Holy Bible be the word of the divine creator and perpetuator of this universe, it is the plain duty of all reasoning human beings to satisfy themselves of that fact.

We have schools of learning almost without number, which delve into the intricacies and mysteries of God's works as expressed to us in nature, and men have lived who devoted their lives to the reveal and explanation of the world, of some of the hidden wonders of nature; we say this is right. Educate the young, that the world may know more of the great book of nature.

Why then, in reading the bible, when we see one inhuman attribute ascribed to God, and honestly doubt it, should we not candidly investigate this so-called word of God.

It is our reasonable duty to prove all things, retain the true and reject the false. Many, no doubt will say, "Why should I investigate, when so many good and educated people, accept, believe and teach the divinity of the bible?" True, this is an easy way in which to dispose of this matter, but is it a reasonable or even a just way? We all know it to be a deplorable fact, that educated people are not all learned. Among the multitudes of college graduates, few are fitted for original thinking, and to fall in with established customs and the usages of the age is generally the quickest and best way to affluence and ease.

Especially is this true of the clergy; schooled in linguistic lore, they accept without question, the established order of things, as taught in their different schools of divinity and we have the ridiculous anomaly of college-bred people, declaring authority for truth, instead of truth for authority.

With these few introductory remarks we now wish to inquire into the foundation of the religion of the Jews, viz, Jehovah's promises to Israel.

According to the accepted chronology of the bible, about 1921 B. C. as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 "Now the Lord God had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (ver 7) "Unto thy seed will

I give this land." (Canaan) Three years elapse. Gen. 13:14-16 "Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward for all the land which thou seest to thee, will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." Four years later 1913 B. C. Gen. 15-5 "Look now toward heaven and tell the stars if thou be able to number them, and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be.

Now to one brought up to believe in a personal God and a chosen people, there is nothing inconsistent in the story as told so far, but to a reasonable believer, the following certainly seems queer: (verse 13) "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." (verse 18) "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates etc.

Thus far no conditions are required of Abram. It seems to be an unconditional promise, repeated at intervals for eight years (1921-1913), but in 1898 B. C., as recorded in Gen. 17:1-22 and twenty-three years after the first promise, the Lord makes circumcision the covenant "between me and you, and thy seed after thee." (verse 10)

The famous test of Abraham's faith as recorded in Gen. 22 wherein is stated that God commands Abraham to "take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Abraham's willingness to be guilty of such an outrageous violation of all parental affection brands him as unworthy of the name of father. That a righteous and upright man should lie (verse 5) and deal treacherously with, bind and make ready to butcher his only son, is just about at par with the idea of a loving heavenly father commanding such a thing. To believe this part of the bible to be divine is asking too much of poor frail humanity. If this is the eternal, unchangeable God's dealings with mankind, from such a God may we all be delivered.

In the year 1706 B. C. occurred the emigration of the children of Israel to Egypt. From being first the favored guests of the Egyptians, they in course of time become slaves of that people; but in 1491 (Ex. 13:4) they came forth out of bondage, leaving but 215 years out of the time of their residence in Egypt, yet Gen. 15:13 states that God said that 400 years

should they be afflicted by the strange people, etc.

God also said the Israelites should be unnumbered for multitude, yet according to their history, correct census of the inhabitants were always procurable, even in the most prosperous periods of Judaism, and never did they own or rule from the river Egypt to the Euphrates.

The promise God made to the Jews he never fulfilled, and their history from the time they lied to, and stole the borrowed articles of the Egyptians (Ex. 3:18-22 and 12:35-36) until the extinction of the Jewish nation was one of rapine, bloodshed and war.

We believe we have correctly and completely quoted the scriptures concerning the promises to Israel, and the records of history make plain to us, how little of divinity there could possibly be in connection with the foundation of the Jewish nation.

One more promise recorded in "holy writ" we wish to notice before closing, see Gen. 8:21, "The Lord said—'Neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.'" Yet later Zephaniah records "I will utterly consume all things from off the land saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast—the fowls of the heaven and the fishes of the sea—and I will cut off man from off the land." How intelligent people can believe and teach the divinity of such stuff is almost past comprehension, and how an intelligent people can justify the expenditure of millions of dollars annually in order to propagate this divinity idea is equally inexplicable. There is less wonder at the growth of crime and suffering and human want, when we consider the vast amount of money, time and energy wasted upon the "thus saith the Lord" idea. THOMAS SMITH. Grants Pass, Or.

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