

plishment of God's purpose; and it was not until the sacrificial knife was extended over the head of Isaac, that the Almighty convinced of his faith, called to him from heaven, saying "Lay not thine hand upon the lad." These were blessed words which, dispelling his grief, restored to his love his only son—a meet reward for his prompt obedience.

This incident in the life of the patriarch is offered to us (christians) for our consideration; and we can gather from it this important truth—that God requires of his servants in every age of the world, a cheerful, an unhesitating obedience to his requirements, irrespective of all selfish considerations. Professors of christianity, who shrink from the performance of their duties through timidity, and those who cavil and doubt as to the good effects resulting from the performance of a plainly inculcated duty, would do well to study this act of Abraham, and mark his conduct in this particular. We have heard christians express themselves as willing to endure the severest death for the cause of God; and at the same time we have seen them neglect or shrink from the performance of simple duties, calculated to advance the glory of God and build up his cause in their midst. The object of a christian should be to obtain a thorough knowledge of his duty in his station in the church, and perform that duty because he is so commanded in the oracles of God: not by fitful starts and impulses, but with a calm and determined conviction that such a course is required of him as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ—a conviction which gaining more strength as each appointed duty is discharged, however small, would enable him if the exigency of the times demanded it to endure persecution, even to the death, for the cause of God.

Amongst the disciples, we meet a numerous class who, destitute of a fixed principle of duty, are zealous for the upbuilding of Zion only as the impulse seizes them. These may be compared to the boreal gleams that light the northern sky with fantastic splendour; but as we gaze and admire their brilliancy, change, and fade, and die. On the other hand, the christian from principle may be compared to the never-changing orb of day, whose influence is unceasingly felt, and whose vivifying power is seen and acknowledged in its grateful effects. Certain it is, that if we expect to accomplish any thing for the advancement of the cause of "pure and undefiled religion before God"—if we look to the formation of that character which will abide

"When gems, and monuments, and crowns,
Have moulder'd down to dust"—

we must learn to regard his service as the first duty of our lives, every thing else occupying a subordinate capacity. Like faithful Abraham, we must offer up our dearest treasure on earth, if our heavenly interests require it; nor in the face of a plain command, stand cavilling for a moment. The people of the world are (theoretically) well acquainted with the duties required of the professor of christianity, and unless they can trace a strong and distinct parallel between our profession and our practice; unless they observe that, actuated by the spirit of our Master, we deny ourselves of "all ungodliness and worldly lusts"—we can never induce them to engage with us in the service of God. If they listen to our professions of zeal and devotion—and find that we content ourselves with mere words, and forget those professions, when occa-