

and it may have occurred to Abraham that God wished to test whether he was willing to give up as much for him as they for their idols. (3) The eternal principles underlying the act were **self-sacrifice and faith**. These are still tested as really, but by means in accord with views of the age.

Certain critics declare that this was an attempt on the part of Abraham to imitate, in a fanatical fashion, the cruel rites of heathenism. But (1) his whole character is at variance with this view of him as an excitable and cruel devotee; (2) it is not clear that human sacrifices were, at that early day, so common in Canaan as they afterwards became (Gen. 15: 16), (3) his act is praised by God (22: 16), which would not have been the case if it were an imitation of the abominations of Molech worship; (4) the very essence of human sacrifice was the certainty of the total loss of the precious victim, but Abraham throughout believed that Isaac would be restored (Heb. 11: 17-19). His merit lies in holding fast to this in spite of Isaac's expected death. "Doubtless when he lifted the knife to slay his son, the sun was turned to darkness to him, the stars left their places, and earth and heaven vanished from his sight; to the eye of sense all was gone that life had built up, and the promise had come actually to an end for evermore; but to the friend of God all was still as certain as ever, all absolutely sure and fixed; the end, the promise, nay even the son of the promise, even he in the fire of the burnt offering was not gone, because that was near and close at hand which could restore,—the great Power which could reverse everything. A voice within said, all this can be undone, and can pass away like a dream of the night, and the heir was safe in the strong hope of him who accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." (Mozely). (5) How far Abraham understood the plan of salvation, we cannot say, but Christ was the object of his faith (John 8: 56), and therefore he must have known that a victim defiled by sin would only pollute Jehovah's altar. The sinless lamb, as type of the sinless Jesus, could alone represent the sinner.

## NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

**INTRODUCTORY.**—More than twenty-five years had passed since our last lesson, during which Abraham's life had been, on the whole, peaceful and prosperous. He was recognized as a "mighty prince" by the peoples amongst whom he dwelt. Abimelech was his sworn friend, and Beersheba was his favorite residence. He seems also to have had a home at Hebron amongst the Hittites, by whom he was regarded with much respect. It was in the midst of this happiness that the message came with which our lesson opens.

**LESSON PLAN.** I. Faith Proved. vs. 1, 2. II. Faith Triumphant. vs. 3-10. III. Faith Rewarded. vs. 11-13.

**I. FAITH PROVED.** 1. **God did prove Abraham (R. V)**—God does not try to make any man commit sin. (Jas. 1: 12-14). Abraham's faith was tested, or tried (Heb. 11: 17). God wished to bring out in full display, for the edification of his people in all ages, and for his own "praise and honor and glory" (1 Pet. 1: 7), the boundless trust which his "friend" placed in him. It was never God's intention that Isaac should be slain (1 Cor. 10: 13). Compare the trial of Job, and also Dent. 8: 2; 2 Chr. 32: 31. **Said unto him**—in some manner which admitted of no doubt that it was God who spoke. 2. Every word was a fresh stab "Thy son," "thine only," "whom thou lovest," "Isaac." The form in the original implies that he wished him to do this freely, now is a word of entreaty, not of time. It is often translated "I pray thee." He must realize fully what is required and decide without constraint. Isaac was the only son of his legitimate wife, and the only one left after the dismissal of Ishmael. Note the points in which Isaac is a type of Christ (John 3: 16). The land of Moriah—The name means "where God appeared," or "which God pointed out" (2 Chr. 3: 1). It was either a well known place of worship, or was named from the circumstances here narrated. Over this district Melchizedek ruled. The Samaritan Pentateuch reads "land of Moreh," but it would have been impossible for Abraham to have travelled from Beersheba to Sichem in a little more than two days (verse 4). **Offer him there**—See the *Preliminary Dissertation*. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit" (Ps. 51: 17).