

others from witnessing what he must have felt to be a horrible deed. *I and the lad will . . . come again.* "This need not be taken as false. Abraham still cherishes some faint hope" (Century Bible). *Wood . . . upon Isaac . . . he took the fire . . . and a knife.* "The boy carries the heavier load and the father the more dangerous one." There is no reference in the Old Testament to methods of procuring fire. Modern caravans carry an iron grating for the fire, and sometimes, owing to the difficulty of getting a light, the charcoal fire used the previous night is carried, hung by a chain and kept burning. *Went both of them together*; a touch of exquisite pathos,—the father with his awful secret tugging at his heart strings, and the lighthearted, curious son.

Vs. 7, 8. *My father.* The artless curiosity of the lad ventures on a question. His mode of address lets us see the filial affection in his heart. *Here am I*; a much too pompous translation. "What is it, son?" gives the meaning excellently. *Where is the lamb?* The boy sees that the all important provision has been omitted. He shows himself a real boy,—trustful, eager, open-eyed. *My son.* All the father's irrepressible love is in the reply. *God will provide himself*; literally, "look out for himself." The father's hope will not die. *Went both of them together*; a repetition (see v. 6) heightening the pathos.

Vs. 9, 10. *The place, etc.* "No name is given, because the places received its name from this event" (Century Bible). *Built an altar*; of the loose stones lying about the place. *Bound Isaac.* The word for "bound" has special meaning of binding the bent fore- and hind-legs of the victim for sacrifice. *Laid him on the altar.* According to Jewish tradition Isaac submitted without resistance or question.

### III. Faith Rewarded, 11-14.

Vs. 11-14. *The angel of the Lord called*; when Abraham has proved his willingness to obey God even to the point of lifting the knife to slay his son. *Lay not thine hand upon the lad.* Abraham's faith had stood the

divine test, and now God would teach that he did not desire human sacrifices. *Now I know.* Abraham has shown his willingness even to sacrifice his son, and God does not require more than that. *Behold behind him a ram*; a picture of the perfect sacrifice which God finds in the gospel,—the spotless lamb of God. *Jehovah-jireh*; literally, "The Lord will see," that is "look out for himself" or "provide" (compare v. 8.).

### Light from the East

HUMAN SACRIFICES—The oldest stories in the Bible—those about the patriarchs—assume that God is to be approached with sacrifices. What purpose sacrifices served would be different at different times. A man might bring a gift to a chieftain or a king to do him honor, to show him gratitude for some favor, or to make him well disposed. And so men came to God with gifts to honor him, and to give thanks, or to appease his anger, or to ask a favorable answer to petitions. What a man offered would be in proportion to the object he had in view. As a rule thank-offerings were reckoned parsimoniously, but men did not shrink from the costliest offerings, if costly offerings were needed to turn away God's wrath and make his face to shine again. In all these matters the Israelites were like their neighbors. The king of Moab did not withhold his son when he thought that such a sacrifice might appease his God's anger, 2 Kgs. 3 : 27. For his country Mesha gave up his son; and some high motive must have appealed to Abraham as worthier than Isaac's life. Of course, in the nature of things human sacrifice was rare. The words of the people in Micah's day were words of desperation: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah 6 : 6, 7.)

### THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

It is commonly believed that the mountain in "the land of Moriah" on which Abraham

was commanded to offer up Isaac was what afterwards became the temple mount in Jeru-