

But probably the incident in the Bible which the young man will hear most earnestly denounced is that concerning the proposed sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. Though the act was not done, and was not intended to be done, yet there stands the command. The objector urges that such a command, though God intended at the last moment to stay the fatal knife, must have been an outrage on the moral sense of Abraham and of the whole world; that it seems a blur upon the moral character of God himself for him to order the death of a child at a father's hands. It is true that the popular answer vindicates God from blame. It is true that we are to look at the "whole transaction, the command and the counter-command; and that Abraham afterwards saw the scope and compass of it, which cleared up every difficulty."<sup>1</sup> But is it enough that we simply clear God and his servant Abraham from blame? This would leave the matter in its negative aspect. It would perhaps excuse, but would it duty it was to punish evil-doers. And, above all, he was, before the surrounding nations, the representative of the Jehovah worship. Hence the enmity of idolatrous princes was directed not only against his throne, but against his God and his religion. See the fifty-eighth Psalm, where we have in the eleventh verse an explanation of the malediction in the tenth verse.

<sup>1</sup> "Moral Difficulties of the Bible."—*Hessey*.