

everything that befalls us—to rise from nature up to nature's God. "Sarah bore Abraham a son at the set time of which God had spoken unto him." v. 2. All God's promises to his people will be eventually accomplished. Unbelief would suggest to us that these promises are impossibilities that will never be realized. When the Christian is afflicted in body or in mind and stripped of his earthly possessions, it is often no small trial to his faith to believe that these calamities come from the hand of a loving God and Saviour, who will order all things for his good. Faith assures the believer, that though he may be poor in worldly goods, yet he possesses all things. To believe in the midst of frailties, faults, and failings, that he is a child of God and heir of his kingdom—that his mortal body shall yet put on immortality, that his frame, after wasting in the grave, and having been food for the worms will one day rise incorruptible, a glorious body, and fit receptacle for the then perfectly holy and immortal spirit—to believe all these unspeakably great and precious promises is no small tax of the Christian faith. But however incredible and impossible, the verification of these promises may appear to mere human reason, with God there is nothing impossible. There shall be a certain performance of all that the Lord has spoken. God is not a man that he should lie nor the Son of man that he should repent.—Num. xxiii. 19. Abraham had to wait with patience for the fulfilment of the promise which had been made to him, and received it with faith, though its realization was contrary to common experience. Through this faith of his, he obtained the honourable distinction of being styled the father of the faithful, and his belief in the promises of God is held up by the Apostle as an example to believers in all ages. (See Rom. iv. 18 v., to the end.)

II. "Abraham called the name of his son Isaac." v. 3. The word Isaac means laughter. The child was thus named, doubtless in testimony of the joy and gratitude experienced by his parents, at the long expected fulfilment of the prediction. He was the child of promise, from whom was to spring that seed, in whom "all nations of the earth were to be blessed." Another reason of his being thus named, was probably to keep in remembrance the unbelieving laugh of Sarah. Gen. xviii 12. It is well to keep mindful of our faults, especially when we are the recipients of extraordinary favour. It is a sanctified means of keeping us humble.

III. "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, mocking." v. 9. Relying upon the external privileges, which he enjoyed as the son of Abraham, Ishmael treated with contempt the present condition, and future expect-

tations of Isaac as the child of promise. "He, that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit." Gal. iv. 29.—v. 10. Sarah said unto Abraham, "cast out this bond-woman and her son." In times of our greatest prosperity, the Lord visits us with crosses. It was through a carnal expediency that Sarah had given Abraham Hagar to wife; and now in the shape of family discord, "her sin had found her out." From Gal. iv. 22 v., to the end, we learn that the persons and events of this narrative, were allegorical. Sarah personified the true church—the Jerusalem which is from above,—and Isaac her son, the true believer. Hagar represented mount Sinai, in Arabia, from which the law was delivered; and Ishmael the bond-man born under the law. By one or other of these two sons are all professing Christians typified. They must be either Isaacs or Ishmaels. These persons, who are trusting to the merits of a crucified Redeemer alone for justification, are like Isaac the children of the free woman, and heirs of the promises.—On the other hand, they who pride themselves in their legal righteousness, and in their external privileges, are compared by the Apostle to Ishmael. Strangers to grace, and to the glorious liberty of the children of God, if they die in this condition—they shall then be cast out into that wilderness, where "the wicked shall be turned, and all the nations that forget God." Psal. ix. 17. "The son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman." Gal. iv. 30.

IV. "And also, of the son of the bond-woman, will I make a great nation, because he is thy seed." v. 13. Believers are called the salt of the earth. Matt. v. 13. By them the earth is preserved from destruction. Even the temporal blessings enjoyed by those who are in juxtaposition with God's people, are innumerable. Gen. xxxix. 5. "Hagar departed and wandered in the wilderness." v. 14. She was probably returning to Egypt to her relations; but she wandered—she lost her way. The necessities for her journey, which had been given her by Abraham, being finished, she went and sat down a good way off from Ishmael; for she could not bear to see the death of her child. "She sat over against him, and lifted up her voice and wept." v. 16. She wept not so much for her own sad condition, as for the sake of the child. O what strong affection is in the mother's heart! Yet what is it in comparison with that infinite love which the Lord has for his people? It is like a drop compared with the ocean. "Can a mother forsake her sucking-child." Is. lxix. "And God heard the voice of the lad." "The Lord is very merciful and full of compassion." Every moment we experience his goodness