

unconsciously he prophesied of the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

Vv. 9, 11.—No resistance made by Isaac. He too must have felt that it was the work of God. Lying there voluntary because it was of God. He is a beautiful type of Christ. To all outward appearance, Abraham looks like those guilty wretches who sacrificed their children to devils; but while in their sacrifice we hear a painful cry of the soul declaring that atonement is needed, and nothing is too precious to give in exchange for it, there was an infinite difference between him and them. Here God, through the mouth of the 'Angel Jehovah,' declares by an act what he repeated in words frequently afterwards (Lev. 18: 31; Deut. 13: 31, &c.), that He would not accept human sacrifices;—He accepts animal sacrifices as sufficient; and at the same time, by making Abraham offer up his nearest in thought and intention, He foreshadows that much more than the blood of beasts is required.

V. 12.—God knew the reality of Abraham's faith before the test. But only by such an act could it have been made clear to Abraham that he must be ready to give up for all God.

V. 13, 14.—Isaac, rescued after having been for three days under sentence of death and living to become the head of countless millions, represents Christ rising from being for three days under the dominion of death "to see His seed and prolong His days."

Jehovah-Jireh, or Moriah, means "in the Mount the Lord will provide," or as our proverbs put the same sentiment, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," and "the darkest hour is nearest the dawn."

DOCTRINES.

(1.) It is not the power of temptations but the weakness of our faith that makes us sin. The young man who wished to get eternal life would not give up all his possessions for it. Had he been willing, he would have gotten them back an hundred-fold, even as Abraham did.

(2.) Abraham was willing to give up his son to the Giver. God gave up His Son to His enemies.

(3.) We are apt to deceive ourselves when we never test our faith. Such tests should always be in accordance with God's clearly revealed will.

THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*Jacob and Esau*—Gen. 27: 34-40

The firstborn has double portion of inheritance (Deut. 21: 17), the authority of the

father; and, in the case of Abraham's seed, the special "blessing" and promises of God, (see ch. 12: 2, 3; 17: 6-8, 19-21; 22: 17; 28: 3, 4, and compare especially Heb 11: 8-20), the fulfilment of which was only complete in the descent from them of the Messias, the Saviour, and in their inheritance of the Heavenly Canaan. But while this seems naturally the birthright of first-born, it was frequently transferred by God's direction to some other son. Isaac was not first-born son of Abraham, though he was indeed the first-born by his wife. Jacob was not first-born, yet God ordained that it should be his (see ch. 25: 23). Reuben, Simeon and Levi, first three sons of Jacob, were passed by for particular sins and the special blessing given to Judah (see ch. 49: 3-10). David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, and Solomon, one of the youngest sons of David, were chosen.

It is a sad story, and the fact that it is told without palliation is an evidence of the truthfulness of the narrative. Isaac, his wife, his two sons, all doing wrong. Isaac—for surely he must have known what the Lord had said (ch. 25: 23), and also that—the beginning of the fulfilment—Esau had sold his birthright to Jacob. Yet, though a good man, in his partiality for Esau he meant to give him the special blessing which seems a part of the birthright, and which, according to God's intimation, could only be fulfilled if given to the younger. Perhaps he had forgotten what took place so many years before. Esau, though frank, brave, good-hearted yet wild, hasty, wilful, caring more for gratification of appetite than for spiritual blessings, first married idolatrous wives, then "despised his birthright" and "sold it for a morsel of meat," (hence called a "profane person," Heb 12: 15); and, having consumed the price, still tried to retain the blessing, and when he failed, resolved to murder his brother. Rebekah—a good and believing woman, yet induced and aided her son to carry out a scheme of deception on his pious, aged and blind father. Jacob—quiet, gentle and apparently upright, (for so the word translated "plain"—25: 27—literally means), yet consenting to carry out such a plot, even bringing God's name into his lie; and, though at first he objected, even then it was to the danger, not the sin. The birthright now of right belonged to Jacob; and, further, Rebekah, and probably Jacob, knew that God had revealed that he should have the superiority. To all appearance, he was about to be wrongfully deprived of it. It was in the effort to prevent this that they fell into such a base fraud. This palliates, but does not excuse their sin. We must not do wrong to accomplish what is right.

"Trembled," &c.—Astonishment, indignation, yet remembrance of the intimation regarding Jacob and his purchase of the birthright, conviction that his design had been wrong, and that the Lord had thus frustrated it, disappointment viewing the momentous consequences of what had been done—perhaps all conflicting within him.