

## CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT.

## ABRAHAM OFFERING UP HIS SON ISAAC.

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, behold, here I am.

"And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."—Gen. xxii. 1, 2.

This is a very affecting story indeed. You may read the whole of it in this chapter, ending with the nineteenth verse.

Abraham had long wished to have a son, when Isaac was born, and he was called by the name Isaac, which means *Laughter*, to show how glad the good old man and his aged wife were, to have a son to comfort them in their old age, and whom they could both love.

But perhaps they thought of Isaac more than of God; and if they did so, they did that which was very wrong, for we ought to love God above all persons or things in the world. Though fathers and mothers should love their children, and children should love their parents, and brothers and sisters, and one another, yet God must be loved better than all.

Abraham and Sarah, no doubt, knew all this, and they did love God; but still there might be a danger of their loving Isaac so as to give him a share of love that did not belong to him, but to God only.

Now God is jealous of us, if he loves us, and he will have us love him. When we say God is jealous, we do not mean as we are of one another, because that is a very ugly thing in us; but we mean that he is very watchful to see that we do nothing to show him we do not love him better than all creatures; and he deserves our love, for he is better to us than all creatures are.

Perhaps therefore to put Abraham to the trial, and to show how far he would go in his love, as well as what real love to God can do, "God did tempt Abraham."

To tempt among us, means to entice one another to do any thing, and very often to do a wrong thing: but here it means only to try. God did try Abraham, to prove how much he loved him; and as he had obeyed him in leaving his country and kindred when he told him, he would still show what more he would do: and knowing that the old man was sincere, he would hold him up for a pattern of faith and love to all good people in time to come.

But what was this trial? God spake to Abraham, and said, "Take thou thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Poor Abraham! had God said, I will make thy dear son sick; had he even said, 'In a few hours Isaac shall die.' this would not half so much have pained his heart. But to be told to take his son for a sacrifice, and to offer him himself—his only son Isaac—Isaac whom he loved—O how dreadful! When little children are sick or die, their parents break their hearts with grief: but what do they suffer compared with poor Abraham, called to slay his own dear son; Perhaps he was struck almost dumb with wonder. Perhaps he wept very bitterly. Perhaps he prayed that Isaac might be spared. But God's will must be done, and he said nothing against it.

You may wonder that God should command him to kill his son: and were any one to suppose he had such a command now, he would show that he was tempted by the wicked spirit, and not tried by the Almighty: but in those times God spake in various ways to pious men, so that they knew when he did speak; and Abraham knew that he would not order him to do what was wrong.

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went into the place of which God had told him."

This journey took Abraham three days, so that all this time he might have repented and turned back. But Abraham knew that God was able to raise up his son, even from the dead: and as God had told him that Isaac should be his heir, he would not dispute his word, but went on his way.

And now he came near the spot, and leaving the young men, he went up the mountain. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together." O what a moment was this for poor Abraham! in a few minutes more, his dear, dear son Isaac must be killed, and bleed like a lamb upon the altar: so he thought. Who can tell how much he was pained at the heart? but still he obeyed God. And if God now tells us to do things difficult to our nature to do, still we must obey him. We must even try to love our enemies, and do them good, because he has told us to do so; though this is very hard to our nature, which likes revenge.—(*To be Continued.*)

## CATECHIZING

[From Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Sketches.]

From little down to least—in due degree,  
Around the Pastor, each in new wrought vest,  
Each with a vernal posy at his breast,  
We stood a trembling, earnest company!  
With low soft murmur like a distant bee,  
Some spake by thought perplexing fears betrayed;  
And some a bold unerring answer made:  
How fluttered then thy anxious heart for me,  
Beloved Mother? Thou whose happy hand  
Had bound the flowers I wore with faithful tie:  
Sweet flowers! at whose unaudible command  
Her countenance, phantom-like, doth re-appear,  
O lost too early for the frequent tear,  
And ill-requited by his heart felt sigh!

## HYMN.

[From Bowring's Matins and Vespers.]

In the dust I am doomed to sleep,  
But shall not sleep for ever;  
Fear may for a moment weep,  
Christian's courage—never,  
Yours in rapid course shall roll,  
By time's chariot driven,  
And my re-awakened soul  
Wing its flight to heaven.  
What though o'er my mortal tomb  
Clouds and mists be blending?  
Sweetest hopes shall chase the gloom,  
Hopes to heaven ascending.  
These shall be my stay my trust,  
Ever bright and vernal;—  
Life shall blossom out of dust,  
Life and joy eternal.

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