

“An Offering”

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How happy Abraham and Sarah must have been when at last they held in their arms the little boy, Isaac, for whom they had waited so long! We may be sure that they taught him just as soon as he was old enough to understand, all about the promise of his birth, and that the seed of Abraham should be “as the stars of heaven for multitude,” and that he was the one through whom this promise was to be fulfilled.

Remember that Isaac was “born of the Spirit,” and so the beautiful fruits of the Spirit must have been early seen in his life: “Love, joy, peace, a long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” What a sweet child to have in the home, and how happy he must have made his parents.

But remember, dear children, that you too may be born of the Spirit, just as he was, and that “Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,” so that you too may be loving, joyful, peaceful, kind as He was, and be a delight and blessing to those around you.

After many happy years, when Isaac was growing into a strong young man, God spoke again to Abraham; and this time his voice filled the loving father’s heart with grief and trouble: “Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of.”

How could this be, when God had said: “In Isaac shall thy seed be called,” and had told him that through Isaac he was to become “the father of a multitude?” And if now he should slay Isaac, how then could the promise of God be fulfilled?

All these perplexing thoughts must have passed through Abraham’s mind, as well as the anguish of having with his own hand to take the life of his only and much-loved son. Yet so perfect was his faith in God’s word, that he did not hesitate for a moment, but early in the morning he rose up and started off with Isaac to the place that God had told him of.

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, . . . accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead.” Abraham believed in “God which quickeneth the dead,” and he knew that God who had given Isaac to him could bring him back again from the dead, which would not be any more wonderful than his birth had been.

As they drew near the place where the offering was to be made, “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.” What a picture: Isaac carrying the wood upon which he himself was to be offered, and Abraham bearing the knife and the fire which were to slay and to consume his own son. “And they went both of them together.”

"And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father, and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering; so they went, both of them together."

At last, at the place God told Abraham of, the altar was built, the wood made ready, and the time had come for Isaac to learn that he was the offering that God chosen. He might have refused to be offered, and could easily have escaped if he had wished to do so.

But no: he had come all the way with perfect trust in his father, not knowing what was to be the end of the journey, and now that this was made known to him they still "went both of them together." Freely Abraham offered his son to God, and freely Isaac gave his life, sharing his father's faith in God's promise.

"And Abraham stretched forth the knife to slay his son; and the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me."

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and behold a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up instead of his son."

What a joyful journey home the father and the son must have had! To Abraham it was just as though he had received Isaac again from the dead, and to Isaac as though he were newly risen, for the life that he had freely given up had been given to him again.

Before this time God had "preached the Gospel unto Abraham;" but some of its lessons he could never have understood without this trial. And the story of it is to teach us also some sweet Gospel lessons about which we will talk another time.