

such a vile crime, and so abominable in the sight of God; for if it be evil in the sight of the Lord today, it was then, for the Scriptures inform us that He changes not, He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and is without variableness or the shadow of turning. But instead of condemnation, God revealed Himself continually to His friend Abraham, teaching His will unto him, revealing all things concerning the future it was necessary for him to understand, and promising him that, though he had been blessed with a son, Ishmael, yet in Isaac, a child of promise, not yet born, should his seed be called. Abraham was to have yet another son. Sarah, in her old age, because of her faithfulness, because of her willingness to comply with the requirements and revelations of God, was to have a son given unto her. Such an event was so unheard of among women at her time of life that, though the Lord promised it, she could not help laughing at the idea. But God fulfilled His promise, and in due time Isaac was born, and was greatly blessed of the Lord.

Determined to try His faithful servant Abraham to the uttermost, the Lord, some years after the birth of this son, in whom He had promised that Abraham's seed should be called, required him to offer up this boy as a burnt offering to Him; and Abraham, nothing doubting, but full of faith and integrity, and of devotion to his God, proved himself worthy of the honored title that had been conferred upon him, namely, "the Friend of God," by taking his son Isaac, in whom most of his hopes for the future centered, up the mountain, and there, having built the altar, he bound the victim, and with knife uplifted, was about to strike the fatal blow, when the angel of the Lord cried out of heaven com-

manding him not to slay his son. The Lord was satisfied, having tried him to the uttermost, and found him willing even to shed the blood of his well-beloved son.

The Lord was so pleased with the faithfulness of Abraham, that He gave unto him the greatest promise He could give to any human being on the face of the earth. What do you think was the nature of that promise? Did He promise to Abraham a crown of eternal glory? Did He promise to him that he should be in the presence of the Lamb, that he should tune his harp and sing praises to God and the Lamb throughout the endless ages of eternity? Let me quote it to you, and it would be well if all the inhabitants of the earth would reflect upon it. Said the Lord:

"In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies."

This was the promise which God gave to Abraham, in that hour of his triumph, in that hour when there was joy in heaven over the faithfulness of one of God's noblest and most devoted sons. Think of the greatness of this blessing! Can you count the stars of heaven, or even the grains of a handful of sand? No, it is beyond the power of earth's most gifted sons to do either, and yet God promised to Abraham that his seed should be as innumerable as the stars of heaven or as the sand on the seashore.

How similar was this promise of God to Abraham to that made by Jesus as a reward for faithfulness to those who followed him! Said Jesus, he that forsakes brothers or sisters, houses or lands, father or mother, wives or children, shall receive a