

We find that after the days of Noah an order was introduced called the patriarchal order, in which every man managed his own family affairs, and prominent men among them were kings and priests unto God, and officiated in what is known among us as the Priesthood of the Son of God, or the Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. Man began again to multiply on the face of the earth, and the heads of families became their kings and priests, that is, the fathers of their own people, and they were more or less under the influence and guidance of the Almighty. We read, for instance, in our revelations pertaining to these matters, of a man called Melchizedek, who was a great high priest. We are told that "there were a great many high priests in his day, and before him and after him;" and these men had communication with God, and were taught of him in relation to their general proceedings, and acknowledged the hand of God in all things with which they were associated. Noah and his descendants, for a length of time, did that which was right in the sight of God to a very great extent, but by and by they departed from his law, and Abraham was raised up as a special agent in the hand of the Almighty to disseminate correct principles among the people, and as a medium through which God would communicate intelligence and blessings to the human family. He went through a very rigid course of discipline, and was tried in almost every possible way, until, finally, he was called upon to offer up his son; and then, when he attempted to do that, and the Lord had fully proved him, the Lord said—"I know that Abraham fears me, that he has not withheld his only son from me, and I know that he will command his children after him

to fear my name." After God had tried Abraham, he took him on to a mountain and said unto him—"Lift up thine eyes eastward and westward, and southward and northward, for to thee and thy seed after thee will I give this land; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." That was a great blessing, and it placed Abraham in a most prominent and important position before God, before the people, and before the world. Now, although God made that promise unto Abraham, yet Stephen, who lived some two thousand years afterwards, said that "God gave him none inheritance in that land, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him, and to his seed after him." There was something peculiar about all these men—being in possession of the everlasting Priesthood, which is without beginning of days or end of years, they measured things with the eye of the Almighty, by the principle of faith, by the knowledge and intuition which the Spirit of God gave them, and the revelations which it imparted, and they felt like one of old who said—"When a man dies, shall he live again? all the days of my life to my appointed time will I wait, until the change come." Inspired by the Spirit of the living God, in possession of the principles of revelation, holding the keys of the everlasting Priesthood, which unlocked the mysteries of the kingdom of God, they looked forward and backward, and felt that they were a part of the great program which God designed to accomplish in regard to the earth. It was not for the immediate possession of some temporary good; not for the grasping of something that they could hold for the time being that they were anxious; but they were after