

THE REWARD OF SACRIFICE

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son" (Heb. 2:17).

Abraham was at this time about one hundred and twenty-five years of age. He had often proved the faithfulness of God, and in this trying hour when he was called to offer this son of promise, for whom he had waited twenty-three years, he was not found wanting. Why should it be an unreasonable demand, when the heathen nations around him offered human sacrifices to their idols? Was he less consecrated than his idolatrous neighbors? Today it is an undisputed fact that many who grow up in heathen religions are more willing to sacrifice for their idols than Christian people are to sacrifice for their Christ. It was not so with Abraham. He counted that God expected to be implicitly obeyed, and did not let reason get in his way. One time he had staggered because of the fear of the possible loss of his own life, but now when he is called to sacrifice the son who meant to him more than life, he "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief: but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able to perform *** accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure".

Abraham made no attempt to substitute an offering of cattle, sheep, silver or gold for the offering of his son. What we substitute for obedience is an abomination to the Lord. God chose the substitute for Isaac, and He alone. He headed the ram of substitution into the thicket on Mount Moriah just in time. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Abraham was not only obedient, his obedience was intelligent. He made all the preparation that a sacrifice of this kind involved. Early in the morning he began his journey toward Mount Moriah. He counted the cost. He knew that he was dealing with a just God, or rather that a just God was dealing with him. The trouble with so many is that they do not sufficiently count the cost, and start out unprepared for the sacrifice to which God has called them, and when the test comes, they back down. It is like the minister who gave the thrilling appeal for missionaries, and when at the close of the service his daughter came and said, "Father, I am the first-fruits of your appeal. I give myself for foreign mission work! The father replied, "Daughter, daughter, I did not mean you!"

Those who expect to sacrifice for the Master do not back down when the test comes. Abraham did not compromise, nor ask for an easier way. He knew the joy of a deep-rooted consecration. Most people these days do not. They avoid the old, rugged way of the cross, because it has too many thorns. They forget it is necessary to press through the thorns to obtain the rose. They may have the outward show of missionary enthusiasm, and even be willing to support others who go, but they use their influence to persuade their children to choose another vocation.

I was asked the other day if I wanted my son to be a missionary. My mind took a sudden flight and considered the cost and the joy of a missionary life, and I am glad I could answer, Yes, with all my heart. The headlines of a paper a short time ago read like this: "From a Missionary to a Mayor", and I read where a grand-

son of the noted missionary, Robert Moffat, had become prime minister of Rhodesia. A mayor or a prime minister may occupy a higher position in the eyes of the world than a missionary, but it rejoices my heart when I see a son or a grandson of a missionary becoming a missionary. In the records of heaven it is a higher rank than that of a mayor, prime minister, or president.

Isaac is the type of the only begotten Son of the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. The wood was laid upon Isaac, even as the cross was laid upon Christ, as He ascended Mount Calvary. This is typical of the load of sin He carried for a lost world (Isa. 53:6). Isaac was a young man of perhaps twenty-five or thirty years of age, and he could easily have overcome his aged father, so far as physical strength was concerned, and refused to become a sacrifice. So could Christ have called for twelve legions of angels to deliver Him from the murderous mob (Matt. 26:53). But, thank God! for your sake and mine, He did not do it. He gave Himself, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

The wood was laid upon Isaac, "Abraham took the fire in his hand". Is not this typical of what we read in the Scriptures, "Our God is a consuming fire?" In permitting us to approach to, and through the fiery trials, He does not permit us to be burned, or tested above that we are able to bear. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

Abraham also carried the knife, typical of the justice of God. God knows when the blade should be applied, and when withheld. As the knife of justice was brought into position to slay, the Lord Himself called: "Abraham, *** 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 as Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, "Behold, a ram caught in a thicket by his horns." The knife was applied to God's substitute. Abraham "went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son".

This scene on Mount Moriah, is typical of the scene on Mount Calvary, where the knife of justice was drawn on the only begotten Son of God, and its keen edge was felt by the Son on the cross, who uttered the lamentable words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" —I. E. Dayhoff. *Good Tidings*.

THE BEST TIME OF LIFE?

"Which is the best age of life?" is a constantly recurring question. No doubt youth is the most attractive.

Some who have passed to riper years would unhesitatingly choose to go back to sixteen or eighteen and try life over. Of course to go back carrying the experience of maturity or age would be a great advantage. However, the only reasonable conception of youth carries with it all of the immaturities and all the lack of experience usually associated with that time of life.

Delightful as the early years may be, there is still much of uncertainty. Here is a promising Christian young man. Some questions present themselves.

He is not yet firmly established in the way of life. Will he walk in all his light in this formative period so that he will come through the times of questionings strong in faith, or will he

so personally recoil from the will of God that he is an easy prey of skepticism and unbelief?

Life offers the largest usefulness to those prepared and trained for its responsibilities. Will this youth become lazy or discouraged, finally following the course of least resistance; or will he overcome difficulties and be his best for God and the kingdom?

If he has personality and promise there will be every opportunity to devote himself to self-seeking. When he is told that his powers and gifts are so great that he can be famous or rich if he will compromise and fail to follow his convictions, will he put his fingers in his ears and cry, "Life, life, eternal life"? Or will he be but added to the ten thousand failures or near failures (or men who are successful in the sight of men but failing in God's sight) who could not afford to follow God?

Then he will probably marry. Will he obtain a life partner who will be a "helpmeet" or a millstone about his neck?

Concerning the young woman the questions are of like order.

Thus the possibility of misstep or failure shades any joyful anticipation we may have concerning any young man or young woman.

The time that lies between youth and old age—the time of life's responsibilities and burden-bearing—has its joys; but here is still the possibility of failure though not so great a probability if one has come so far well.

Perhaps there is nothing more sad than the sight of an old man or old woman come to the end having lived the life of self—pursuing his own ends and now about to leave all his treasure.

But we are not thinking of these but of those old people who have fully followed God, who are come to seventy or eighty years and are now able to look back upon a life and influence well spent, upon battles fought and victories won. How wonderful it must be to face the future knowing that the end of the earthly journey has come and that one is ready for the change! Such an one can hear in joyful anticipation, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Surely this, the end of days well spent, is the best time of life. Such an end can come only to those who have their hope in the atonement and have made good during the years which have gone before.

"Sunset and evening star,

And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the bar,

When I put out to sea,

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,

Too full for sound and foam,

When that which drew from out the boundless deep

Turns again home."

—The Free Methodist

Statistics prepared by the Catholic chaplain of Sing Sing prison shows that the church affiliation of the prisoners is as follows: Catholics, 855; Protestants, 518; Jews, 117; Scientists, 20; besides a few smaller groups.—The Free Methodist.

"A woman who passed through New York into New Jersey by the subway and the tube, was asked what she thought of the city. She replied she could not tell, as she had only a worm's-eye-view of it. This is the case with many of us. We live too low to get the upper, larger vision."—Good Tidings.