

wood upon the altar, and lifted the knife to strike the fatal blow, and while his arm was outstretched the Lord spake, saying: "Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad, for the Lord shall provide thee a sacrifice," and he looked round and found a ram in a thicket, and he placed it on the altar and offered a burnt offering before the Lord. The Lord then took him aside and said: "Lift up thine eyes eastward, westward, northward and southward, for to thee and to thy seed after thee will I give this land; and thy seed shall be as numerous as the stars in the heavens, and like the sand on the sea shore so shall they be innumerable; and in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee, and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The Lord proved him and found him faithful in all things. That was a severe test to human nature; but there were other ideas crowding on his mind that were ten thousand times more formidable than these paternal feelings which gushed and welled up in his bosom when told to offer up his son as a sacrifice. What was it? Why the Lord had told him that he would make of him a nation and a multitude of nations, and that he should be the father of many nations, and yet he told him to go and offer up his only son. And he was an old man and his wife an old woman; and it was not only the idea of taking the life of his son that was crowding upon his mind, but the cutting him off in regard to posterity and the promises that God had made to him in regard to the magnitude of the peoples that should arise from him, or from his loins, and leaving him, as it were, a dry root, helpless, hopeless, tottering on the grave without any heir. Paul very justly remarks that in the midst of all these things, "he staggered not through

unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God; believing that he from whom he had received him, as it were from the dead, would be able, if he had even slaughtered his son, to raise him from the dead." He was strong in faith, says Paul, "giving glory to God." He had had the visions of his mind unfolded in regard to the future; he had looked through the dark vista of future ages. Inspired by the spirit of revelation he contemplated the purposes of God as they rolled forth in all their majesty and glory and power, and considered that He was to be one of the great actors in this great world drama that should be exhibited in the after ages or time, and in the eternities that were to come. Jesus said of him, "Abraham saw my day and was glad." But he saw in this, apparently, all his hopes blasted; but notwithstanding he had faith and confidence in God, and he stood there like the beaten anvil to the stroke, or the sturdy oak defying all storms and blasts and influences. He was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Nothing but the spirit of revelation could have given him this confidence, and it was that which sustained him under these peculiar circumstances.

He then told him that, by and by, his seed should go down into bondage in Egypt, and should remain there four hundred years, and that then they would be delivered. He also made promises concerning his posterity, telling him they should inherit that land; and yet, singular to say, notwithstanding these revelations and promises from the Lord, several thousand years after, when Stephen was referring to these promises, he said, "he gave him none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot;" but he told him that he would "give it to him, and to his seed after him, for an everlasting inheri-