

in disguise, 1 Pet. 1 : 6, 7. Obedience is the fruit of faith. Man's extremity is God's opportunity.

### ISAAC'S PROSPERITY.

OCTOBER 3. B. C. 1804. GENESIS XXVI : 12-25.

**ISAAC SOWED**—he settled down as a farmer. *An hundred fold*—an unusually large return, and he had inherited great wealth from his father, ch. 25 : 5. *The man waxed great*—became so influential that the Philistines among whom he lived envied him, Prov. 27 : 4. V. 15. *All the wells*—The digging of wells in this rocky country was attended with too much labour and expense for mere tenants, it implied the ownership of the land, and no more effective mode of expressing envy or enmity could be devised than to choke up an enemy's well with sand or stones—one of the common modes of ancient warfare, 2 Kings 3 : 19, 25. The flocks and herds could not subsist without water drawn from wells. Vs. 16, 17. *Abimelech*—a common title of the Kings of Philistia, corresponding to the Pharaoh's of Egypt. *Go from us*—gave him notice to quit. *Isaac departed*—being of a peaceable disposition he did not remonstrate, but went to another part of the same district. Vs. 18-22. *Dugged again*—evidencing industry and perseverance. The naming of the wells by Abraham, the changing of their names by the Philistines to obliterate the traces of their origin, the restoration of the names by Isaac, and the contest between the respective shepherds, show how much importance was attached to wells in a warm country where water was scarce and indispensable to the farmer. V. 23. *To Beersheba*—"well of the oath"—a city on the south frontier of Palestine, 27 miles south-east from Gaza, intimately associated with the history of both Abraham and Isaac, so called in remembrance of the covenant made between Abraham and Abimelech, ch. 21 : 31. Its name was restored by Isaac, v. 38. It continued to be a prominent landmark all through Bible history—"from Dan to Beersheba" being regarded as the limits of Palestine. Two of the wells still remain, at "Bir es Seba," surrounded by drinking troughs of stone, their curbstones deeply worn by the friction of ropes in drawing water. V. 24. *The Lord appeared*—the same angel of the covenant who had appeared to Abraham, ch. 15 : 18 and 22 : 10, 15, and, afterwards, to Moses in Horeb, Exo. 3 : 6, 15, and 4 : 5. See also Matt. 22 : 32 and Acts 7 : 32. *Fear not*—A reassuring expression often used by Jehovah, see Ps. 27 : 1. Rev. 1 : 17. V. 25. *Builted an altar*—thus making a public recognition of God's goodness to him. Wherever we go, we must take our religion with us. *Pitched his tent*—dwelt for a time; here we have no continuing city, Heb. 13 : 14. He died at Hebron, ch. 35 : 27. aged 180, and was buried beside his father and mother, Gen. 49 : 31.

LEARN that religion teaches us self-denial and to live peaceably with all men. Children may expect to receive the blessings promised to obedience to parents. The well of salvation is ever open and free to all, Isa. 55 : 1. John 4 : 13, 14.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM IN OUR S. S. WORK.

The question submitted to the last General Assembly by the Sabbath School Committee in their Report, was—

"How can we elevate the Standard of attainment in our S. S. Teachers, and thus increase their teaching power?" The following is part of a scheme submitted, and left with the Committee and Presbyteries to prove its suitability by trying the work.

1. A written examination on the life, work, and closing days of Moses, as detailed in the last four books of the Pentateuch.

2. A written examination on the first twenty-eight questions of the Shorter Catechism and the portion of Scripture on which they are based.

For the carrying out of the above scheme of study the following regulations for students and candidates are to be strictly observed.

1. Examinations to be held simultaneously at convenient centres in each Presbytery of the Church, on the——day of April, 1881.

2. One examination for the whole Church, to be set on each subject, and forwarded under sealed covers to the persons in charge of the various examinations in Presbyteries; the covers not to be removed until the candidates are met in the appointed place: and the written answers to be enclosed and sealed for transmission to the Convener of the Assembly's S. S. Committee before the candidates leave the place of examination.

3. The S. S. Committees shall be responsible to the Church, with such aid as they can call to their assistance; they shall set the papers and value the questions and answers given in, and report thereon.

4. It shall be competent and it is desired: that prizes in such form and of such value as the donors may indicate, may be given by a Presbytery for the best examination within its bounds; or by a congregation or individual in that congregation for the best examination in its class, subject to the plan and regulations of the Committee.

5. All persons, male and female, passing the prescribed examination on the prescribed subjects shall be entitled to a neatly engrossed recognition of that fact, and their names reported to the General Assembly, and Presbyteries to which they belong.

6. No name shall be so reported unless they have answered 50 per cent. of all the questions submitted, and all who shall enter on this course of study shall pay 25 cents each to meet contingent expenses with the Scheme.

7. The studies may be carried on in classes in each congregation; or by groups of persons in rural districts, aided by the Pastor