



LESSON IX.—September 1.

Isaac, the Peacemaker.

Genesis xxxvi., 12-25. Memory verses 24, 25. Read Ephesians iv., 2, 3.

Golden Text.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.'—Matthew v., 9.

Lesson Text.

(12) Then Isaac sowed in the land, and received the same year an hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him (13). And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: (14) For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants; and the Philistines envied him. (15) For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them and filled them with earth. (16) And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we (17) And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. (18) And Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham; and he called their names after the names which his father had called them. (19) And Isaac's servants digged in the valley and found there a well of springing water. (20) And all the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours; and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him. (21) And they digged another well and strove for that also; and he called the name of it Sitnah. (22) And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not; and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, for now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. (23) And he went up from thence to Beersheba. (24) And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said I am the God of Abraham thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. (25) And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

Suggestions.

When Isaac was about forty years old he married the beautiful and talented Rebekha, whose story is told in the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis. Twin sons were sent to them, Jacob and Esau, who grew up to be men of very different characteristics.

A famine arose and Isaac and all his household moved west to Gerar in the south of Canaan. There the Lord God appeared to him and renewed the covenant which he had made with Abraham, promising mighty blessings. Isaac was the child of promise and the heir of the promises. God has a plan for our lives. In his heart each individual has a place, and for each one of us he has planned a beautiful life. God planned to make of Abraham and his descendants a great nation who should walk with God in this world. But he could only fulfil his promises as long as the people were obedient and sincere. If we allow any unbelief or insincerity in our hearts, that will always stand between us and God. Abraham believed God, and Isaac also believed.

The Lord God blessed Isaac so mightily that the people of the land grew very envious and perhaps afraid of him. Abimelech, king of the Philistines, went to Isaac and asked him to leave his country, because he was greater than the inhabitants who doubtless felt as though he were growing rich at their expense. So Isaac went and settled in the valley of Gerar, and reopened the wells which his father had dug and which

the Philistines had enviously filled up again. Isaac gave honor to his dead father by calling the wells by the names which Abraham had given them. Isaac's servants dug a new well in the valley where they found exceptionally good water, but the herdmen of Gerar declared that the water belonged to them, and they fought about it with Isaac's servants. Isaac called the name of that well Esek, meaning contention, and when the same thing happened about the next well he called it Sitnah, meaning hatred or spite.

Isaac meekly left those wells and dug another about which no contention arose, so he called it Rehoboth, meaning room. The Lord God makes room for peaceful people and the meek shall inherit the earth. In this little incident Isaac showed his possession of four of the blessed characteristics mentioned by our Lord (Matt. v., 3-10), he was poor in spirit, meek, merciful and a peacemaker, and probably also he was persecuted for righteousness' sake, for the Philistines knew that he worshipped the Lord Jehovah, the only true God.

God wants us to be practical Christians, honest and true and pure in our inmost thoughts, and in our daily lives fulfilling his commandments and glorifying him. Isaac glorified God in his patience and meekness. Every day we have opportunities to glorify God and to build up holy characters by little deeds of loving kindness and meekness. And every day the Saviour has promised to be with us and to help us to please God. We need not wait for what seem like great opportunities to please God for if we do not improve the smallest opportunities we will not be ready for the great ones when they come. Besides the things that seem small in our eyes may be of great importance to the kingdom of God. The only way to succeed in pleasing God at all is to lovingly and gratefully try to please him in everything. Jesus will help if you try.

Isaac moved to Beersheba, and the Lord appeared to him again that same night, saying, Fear not, for I am with thee and will bless thee, renewing the promise given to Abraham. Isaac built an altar there and stayed there and God blessed him there mightily.

C. E. Topic.

Sun. Sept. 1.—Topic—Spiritual acquaintance.—Job xxii., 21-23.

Junior C. E. Topic.

MEETING TEMPTATIONS.

Mon., Aug. 26.—Keep away from wrong.—Job xxviii., 28.

Tues., Aug. 27.—Do right.—I. Cor. xv., 34.

Wed., Aug. 28.—Jesus' example.—Luke iv., 8.

Thu., Aug. 29.—Bible strength.—Matt. iv., 4.

Fri. Aug. 30.—Prayer.—Matt. vi., 13.

Sat., Aug. 31.—Jesus our helper.—Heb. ii. 18.

Sun., Sept. 1.—Topic—How to meet temptation.—Matt. xxvi., 41; I. Cor. x., 12, 13.

The advice an experienced pastor gave to a class of young men going out to preach the Gospel is just as good for every Sabbath school teacher. He said, 'Aim at the hearts in preaching. Not every man has a head, but every man has a heart. If you aim at the head you will miss some of your hearers. If you aim at the heart you will hit them all. Aim at the heart.' Good advice is that for every teacher of the young. The true measure of every Christian worker's personal power is found largely in the heart. If you long to win the souls of your scholars to Christ, you must love them. Some one has said, 'There is but one rare and precious coin with which you can purchase the costly treasure of a child's heart, and that coin bears the image and superscription, Love. First, love to Christ, and then love for the souls for Christ's sake, should be the motto of every teacher. With such an inspiration, no one could fail of success.—Dr. Hallock.

'We know of a prominent clergyman,' says the 'Hull Christian Voice,' 'zealous of good works, who prides himself on his ability to steer the middle course of moderation. He brought up his children likewise, even to the ridiculing and tempting of their young friends who were abstainers. Result—his two sons have become victims of the awful craving. Will their blood not be upon their father's head?'



A Voice from Heathendom.

We find in 'L'Alcool' an article on alcoholism in Madagascar, and the measures taken for its suppression by the predecessors of the present Queen Ranavaloa. To begin with, there is reference to a king who loved rum, as did his courtesans and his counsellors. 'When they deliberated on the affairs of the kingdom they drank toaka, the king and his counsellors; if any one spoke of war they asked: Who is the man that would be bold enough to make war against the king? And then they deliberated, the deliberation consisting in drinking toaka. Then the king slept from the effects of the drink and the counsellors separated and were found drunk in the highways.'

'Then one arose who said "I do not love toaka; toaka shall be for the king and the kingdom shall be mine. The country ought necessarily to belong to me, for the king drinks toaka every day and he is drunk every time he drinks. What I advise is that you do not use it; I do not wish it; it gives a bad name to the government and if you use it it may happen that I may not be able to conquer the kingdom. Do not use it," said he at the commencement of his reign, when he had reunited the provinces to the kingdom; and when he had subdued the Merina and taken possession of Tananarive he made a law about toaka.

"This is what I have to tell you, my counsellors, my wife and my children. Now that I have definitely conquered the kingdom, if I find anyone drinking toaka, or I learn this of anyone, I regard him as seeking to prevent me reigning. You have seen that the people who drink toaka try to deceive when they drink, and therefore I shall condemn to death those whom I find drinking toaka and I shall maintain peace in the kingdom, for the ideas which they borrow from toaka make the rich turn aside from the way of prosperity and reduce them finally to misery. Also, those who drink or who shall send it into the interior I shall condemn to death."

The people asked, "Why do you not love toaka?" and he said "Because it takes count of nothing, neither of a prince, nor of the family, nor of the future, nor of the government." The people answered "This is true," and they fell into accord with the king and said "We condemn to death those who shall drink toaka whoever they may be, whether they may have rendered service to the state, have been able travellers, have been brave scalars of villages, they shall be condemned to death." Some paid no heed to these threatenings and they were put to death according to the terms of the established convention.

'One day the king said "Let us test the effect of toaka; let us search out a fine fighting bull and make him drink toaka." Then they made the bull drink toaka and he became drunk and fell down and remained immovable. Then the king said "Kill him and bring me his liver that I may examine it." After having examined it he found it was burned and he said "Look now, O people, we see in the ox the proof of the injurious effects of toaka. No one is so powerful as the bull, and nevertheless the toaka is so bad that it has been able to burn his liver, what would have happened had it been the heart of a man? Let us prevent toaka coming here; let us leave it in the country where it is. If anyone makes it come here I will condemn him to death, I will not spare his life."—Temperance Record.'

An Effective Lesson.

A drunkard in New Orleans was recently saved from continuing his career of dissipation in a peculiar manner. The young man in question was of a fine family and had splendid gifts, but was going down as fast as it was possible for a man to go through strong drink. His friends had pleaded with him, but he had taken their warnings as an insult. One day one of them, who was a court stenographer, determined to try a new tack with him. He was sitting at a restaur-