

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

ISAAC, A LOVER OF PEACE.*

By Rev. J. W. McMillan, B.A.

Isaac sowed, v. 12. This is more than Abraham had done, who had only pastured flocks and herds. A son ought to advance upon his father's labors. All good fathers expect their sons to be greater and wiser than they have been. For the son has the advantage of the father's experience, and of living later in the world. A dwarf on a giant's shoulders will see farther than the giant. We should never say, "What was good enough for the old folk (or for anybody else), is good enough for us." The apostle Paul tells us to "covet earnestly the best gifts." Only the best is good enough.

The Philistines envied him, v. 14. There was one possession of Isaac's which the Philistines did not envy. That was the covenant blessing. They under stood the value of cattle and camels; but the value of a prescriptive right to make all the families of the earth happier, they cared nothing for. Yet that was by far the most valuable possession Isaac had. After all, the people that envy do not know all that is to be known about values. The best property to own is cultivation of mind, strength of will, and trustfulness toward God. These things excite no envy, and cause no theft.

Isaac digged again, . . . v. 18. Our fathers had grand wells, wells of salvation, out of which they drew the purest clearest, coolest and most refreshing water. Some of them are getting filled up, and need to be re-digged. One is the Bible well, for their children do not read and study that divine book as they should. Another is the Family Worship well, which used to gush every day its living stream, and now, in many homes, is nearly dry. Another is the Strict Obedience well, for nowadays, even very young children seem to expect to have their own way. And you can think of many other wells for yourselves.

Isaac digged again, v. 18. Digging is dreadfully tiresome work, and digging a second time the same wells must have been disheartening. But it is the people who can dig and dig again that stand before kings. John Halifax, in the book of that name, when asked if he could escape through the knotted thorn hedge around the garden, replied, "Yes, I could break every one of these twigs, one after another, and get away." Let us all cultivate the capacity to keep on doing things!

Esek, v. 20. A gentleman who owned a favorite collie, noticed that, whenever he passed a certain house on the street, the dog would make a wide detour by the opposite sidewalk. He was surprised, for he knew that his dog was full of pluck. But when he discovered that a savage bull-terrier dwelt at that house, he acknowledged the collie's wisdom. A collie has no business fighting a bull-terrier; and a wise person knows that he ought to pass contention by. Quarrels are good things to leave on the other side of the street. whether we win or lose in the contest, we lose more than the cause of the contest was worth. Even if we gain the matter in dispute, we cheat ourselves of time and peace and happiness.

Fear not, for I am with thee, v. 24. It makes all the difference, who is there. When a child wakes up in the

night and hears some one moving in the hall, just outside the bedroom door and calls out in terror, "Who is there?" with what relief he hears his father's voice reply, "Don't be afraid, my son, it is your father." And, similarly, if ever you are placed as Isaac was, without a friend on earth and his neighbors showing enmity, you will find that it will hearten you and send you smiling to your day's work to hear your heavenly Father's voice saying, "Fear not, for I am with thee."

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

Beer-Sheba—Was a small village or settlement near the cluster of wells on the edge of the southern desert, which marked the boundary of the Promised Land. In some of the valleys near it, where there is moisture, the soil is very rich, and crops of wheat and barley are still grown. But the principal use of the surrounding country is for grazing, and towards evening the flocks and herds gather around the wells, as they did in Isaac's day. There are seven wells there now, but several of them are dry most of the year. The principal well is 45 feet deep, and is lined with hewn stone to a depth of 23 feet. The blocks round the edge are deeply cut by the ropes of successive generations drawing up the water, and great circular blocks of marble, that have been hollowed into drinking troughs, stand all round it. Just after the rainy season, for a month or two the country is covered with verdure and flowers; but from the middle of summer everything is burned up, and only the bare chalky rocks burning in the sun meet the eye. In the early Christian centuries the region was thickly populated; but the conquest of the country by the Mohammedan Arabs made it a desert again.

SATISFIED.

By M. P. B. Cook.

We want! we want! this is the cry
Of human joy and agony,
And even high, ecstatic bliss
Still craves for something more than
this.

If sickness clouds a mellow sky,
And fearful shadows over fly,
The soul sighs upward in its grief
For kinder omens and relief.

If hunger and distress press sore,
Gnawing the heart-strings more and
more.

Until both strength and courage fail,
While faintness and despair prevail.

So that the little ills we meet
Both hurt our hands and trip our feet,
Till every trusted prop has gone,
And nought remains to lean upon.

We then confess the nothingness
Of all the wealth our hands possess;
The littleness of boastful pride
And all we have of earth beside.

Then constant faith unwearied tries
To rest in God's great promises,
And finds for all the wretchedness
A healing balm and perfect peace.

I once saw a dark shadow resting on the bare side of a hill. Seeking its cause I saw a little cloud, bright as the light, floating in the clear blue above. Thus it is with our sorrow. It may be dark and cheerless here on earth; yet look above, and you shall see it to be but a shadow of his Brightness whose name is Love.—Alford.

PRODUCING TROUBLE.

By C. H. Wetherbe.

The history of many a church shows the fact that when certain professors of religion assume that they have reached a much higher plane of piety than is possessed by the most of the members of their church, they are very apt to produce trouble in the body. Many a division in a church has had its beginning in this way. Of course the producers of the division insistently deny the charge that they are at fault. It is always others who do the harm. They themselves are only seeking to make the church better. In their estimation the church, as a whole, is awfully corrupt, while they, themselves are entirely free from wrongness. It is this assumption that leads in many instances, to trouble and even disruption in the churches to which such ones belong.

From an editorial in The Standard of Chicago I take the following words: "Here are men who stand, so they claim, for a type of piety distinctly higher than that found in the average Christian. They are ostensibly contending for fuller trust in God, more absolute dependence upon the Holy Spirit, yet, in their alleged pursuit of these high ends, they do not hesitate to disrupt churches, and thus bring reproach upon the cause of Christ. Does it ever occur to them that discord and antagonisms are displeasing to God? If necessary, in order to gain their ends, the good name of a church for concord and brotherly love is sacrificed, as if it were a thing of no value whatever."

This fairly states the facts in a large number of instances. Among the most intolerant people on earth are those religionists who assume that they are far advanced in spiritual life. They have the idea deeply ingrained in them that it is their duty to regulate the lives of other members of their church by their own notions of piety, and if others will not submit to their dictation, then they will vehemently denounce them, making it most uncomfortable for the others to remain in their company. But some of this class are not contented with even such a result. They will use all diligence to get members to leave their church and flock with the zealous reformers. The apostles had much trouble with just such people and churches in those days suffered from them. The church that is afflicted with those pietists ought to exclude them with promptness.

HABITUAL KINDNESS.

There is no gift of grace that goes further toward making one beloved than the art of simple kindness. Just to be kind, in smile and word and deed, is the shortest, surest road to power over other lives. It is better to be kind than brilliant; one brings affection and loyalty; the other usually brings in its train only envy and bitterness. This adornment of simple kindness is one within the reach of everybody. There is no person so untalented as to be incapable of habitual kindness. The grace is one that grows in any soil, and beneath clouds or sunshine, snow or rain. It has taken centuries for men to grow into anything like an appreciation that is adequate of the wondrous excellencies of Jesus Christ; but the humblest peasant by the Lake of Galilee or upon the hills of Judea, could instantly discern and understand his simple kindness; for kindness is the universal language.—Westminster.

*S.S. Lesson March 10, 1907. Genesis 26: 12-25. Commit to memory vs. 16, 17. Read Genesis, chs. 20 to 25. Golden Text—Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.—Matthew 5:9.