

True, a few of the heavy fuchsia blossoms were splashed with the wet soil; some of the largest rose blossoms had been knocked off; one or two scarlet geraniums looked rather weather-beaten; and there were deep marks in the ground where the heavy rain-drops had fallen.

But when Mr. Grant had put a stick to support this plant, lightly brushed the leaves of that splashed plant, cut off a dead blossom or leaf here, and put a few skillful touches with the rake there, you would have said the little garden looked all the better for the rain—it was so fresh and green and bright.

And so Margaret thought, as she stood watching her father removing all the traces of the storm which had alarmed her so much the night before as she thought of her dear flowers all exposed to it outside.

"Why, papa," she said, smiling, "my dear darling flowers are not so much the worse, after all; I think they look all the fresher for the rain. I was going to water them yesterday, only John said we should have rain before night. Oh, thank you, papa! It does look so nice now, and my pretties aren't dead, after all."

"Daisy, my darling," said her father, as they moved down one of the side-walks, "you must try and trust the great Gardener, my child, who sends the rain and the wind as well as the sunshine. There was a time when four other little flowers besides my precious Daisy grew in my cottage garden, and were a daily and hourly pleasure to me as I watched their growth, and took care of them—my poor motherless darlings. But one day a great storm came, such blinding hail, such roaring raging wind and tempest, as I pray you may never see, my child—when no sun nor stars for days appeared. And my little flowers tended with such love and care, watched over day and night with prayers, my little flowers were taken from me, and for a while I cried, dear—as you cried last night—in my darkness and in my fear, for it seemed as if I had lost them, as if they had been wrecked by that cruel storm which took them all away. But in the morning my weeping changed to joy. God had spared me my little Daisy, and as I clasped you in my arms, dear, your little baby lips asked me where brothers and sisters were, and I could only say, 'In heaven.' You taught me then, my child, what I am teaching you—to trust. And now I know my little darlings are transplanted to a better soil than this, where everlasting spring abides, and never withering flowers—where no storms come, but all is calm and rest and peace. May little Daisy and I go there too!"

"Forty years I have lived in sin," said a man in the Mission House in Baxter Street, New York, on April 6th, during a service held by the Salvation Army. "You all know me," he continued, "and you know what I say is true. I never passed a saloon when I had any money in my pocket, and for forty years I have never been sober when I had the means to get drunk. But two weeks ago I had the curiosity to come in here to see the Salvation Army, and now I am a new man. I cannot tell how it is, but I know it is so. I humbly believe my sins are forgiven, and I mean to work for Jesus. People say there is nothing in it, but I ask you whether it is 'nothing' that enables me to pass the liquor saloons now and to speak without swearing. But I cannot explain what I feel." As the man spoke, obviously under profound emotion, the thoughts of some were carried back to the narrative of the blind man whom Christ cured, (John ix. 25), and who had similar personal proof of the genuineness of the work done in him.

International S. S. Lessons.

THE LESSON LIST

- Oct. 3. ISAAC'S PROSPERITY—Gen. xxvi. 12-25. Golden Text, Prov. x. 22. Commit 23-25
- Oct. 10. JACOB AND ESAU—Gen. xxvii. 22-40. Golden Text, Prov. iv. 27. Commit 38-40
- Oct. 17. JACOB AT BETHEL—Gen. xxviii. 10-22. Golden Text, verse 15. Commit 12-16
- Oct. 24. JACOB'S PREVAILING PRAYER—Gen. xxxii. 9-12. 22-30. Golden Text, Luke xviii. 1. Commit 26-30
- Oct. 31. JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT—Gen. xxxvii. 1-5. 23-26. Golden Text, Prov. xxvii. 4. Commit 32-35
- Nov. 7. JOSEPH IN PRISON—Gen. xxxix. 21-23; xl. 1-8. Golden Text, Psa. xxxvii. 7. Commit 21-23
- Nov. 14. JOSEPH THE WISE RULER—Gen. xl. 41-57. Golden Text, Prov. xxii. 22. Commit 46-49
- Nov. 21. JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS—Gen. xlv. 30-34; xlv. 1-8. Golden Text, Rom. xii. 21. Commit 1-4
- Nov. 28. JACOB AND PHARAOH—Gen. xlvii. 1-12. Golden Text, Prov. xvi. 31. Commit 7-10
- Dec. 5. LAST DAYS OF JACOB—Gen. xlviii. 8-12. Golden Text, verse 21. Commit 15, 16
- Dec. 12. LAST DAYS OF JOSEPH—Gen. l. 14-26. Golden Text, Prov. x. 7. Commit 18-21
- Dec. 19. REVIEW OF THE LESSONS
- Dec. 26. LESSON SELECTED BY THE SCHOOL.

SEPT. 12.

Gen. 22: 1-14

The Trial of Abraham's Faith.

GOLDEN TEXT—Gen. 22: 1-14. Time 15-20 B. C.

CONNECTION AND INTRODUCTION

A period of something more than twenty-five years intervened between the events of our last lesson and of this. During this time Abraham journeyed again toward the south country, and remained some time in Gerar. In process of time, Isaac, the child of promise, was born, Ishmael and his mother were sent away, Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant of peace, and Abraham continued to reside in or near Beer-sheba, in the southern part of Palestine, until the period of our present lesson. In order to fully understand the lesson before us, we must regard the transaction of which we are there told as not only a trial of Abraham's faith, but as a most striking and accurate typical representation of the sacrifice of Christ. We have in it a loving father freely offering up in sacrifice an only and well-beloved son, and an obedient and unresisting son yielding himself without a murmur to his father's will. The filling out of this grand picture we shall see as we proceed. Abraham, doubtless, earnestly desired a deeper insight into God's purposes, and here God, while sorely trying his faith, rewards his sublime endurance of the trial by revealing to him Christ in His character of a sacrificial offering for the sin of the world. (See John, 8: 56; Gal. 3: 8; Heb. 11: 13).

LESSON NOTES.

- (1). After these things,—that is, the things related in the last chapter—God did tempt (test, try,) Abraham. We are not to suppose that God tempted Abraham in the sense of seeking to draw him into sin, for we are plainly told (James 1: 13) that God tempts no man. But God subjected Abraham to a test or trial by which his character and the power of his faith should become better known than it could otherwise be—not to God, for God knew already what Abraham was, and what he would do—but to himself and all that should come after him. And said unto him, Abraham; and he said, here am I; or, behold I. Abraham's answer showed that he was waiting for God's command, and holding himself in readiness to obey it, whatever it might be.
- (2). Take now thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest. Isaac was Abraham's only son in the sense of being his only true heir; the only one in whom the promises were to be fulfilled; the only one through whom his posterity should be traced. And get thee into the land of Moriah. This is supposed to be the country around Jerusalem; and the place where Isaac was offered up, the Calvary where Christ was afterwards crucified. The latter opinion may be true, yet there is no certain evidence that it is so. Offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, &c. This was undoubtedly a most unexpected command, and one that must have tried his faith to the utmost. But Abraham's faith in God was not to be shaken; and without a single murmur, or word

of questioning or dissent, he proceeded to make ready for the sacrifice. A command coming from God to offer up a human sacrifice, must have filled him with astonishment; but how great must his astonishment have been when told that that sacrifice was to be his own son! But he did not hesitate at this apparently contradictory view of God's character. He had faith that could trust God even where he could not trace either His wisdom or His goodness.

(3). And Abraham rose up early in the morning, &c. He made haste to meet the trial, anticipating all the needful preparations, such as preparing the wood, taking with him the cords to bind, and the knife to slay the victim, and young men to be his assistants by the way. All this showed how calm was his trust, and how settled was his purpose to obey God. Whatever might have been his natural pain of heart, it does not seem in the least to have affected his conduct. His heart was "fixed, trusting in the Lord."

(4). The third day. We are not necessarily to conclude that three entire days were required for the journey, but that, on the third day from the time the command was given, they came in sight of the place God had told Abraham of. The distance from the point from which Abraham is supposed to have started, to the neighborhood of Jerusalem, is not far from thirty Roman miles.

(5). And Abraham said unto his young men, &c. He would go unattended to this painful duty. Possibly he feared that his servants, through love to Isaac, and seeing what was about to be done, would seek to turn him from his purpose. As God had laid this duty upon himself alone, he would have no one near who could interfere or seek to prevent his doing what God had commanded him to do. I and the lad will go yonder and worship. The offering up of appropriate sacrifices was an act of solemn worship. God had appointed Isaac as the sacrifice on this occasion; hence the offering of him would be, on the part of both, an act of worship. Come again to you. Abraham had full confidence that they should both return to the young men. (See Heb. 11: 17-19).

(6). Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac. The iniquity of all his people was laid by God upon Jesus. (Is. 53: 9) as well as the cross upon which He was crucified.—(John 19: 17). Abraham (a type of God) took the fire in his hand and a knife: (types of divine justice—Is. 53: 10) and they went, both of them together. These words, both of them together, are particularly significant. Abraham and Isaac, the one a type of the Divine Father, the other of Jesus Christ, His Son,—the one bearing that which was to be the cause of his own consuming, the other the fire and the knife, symbols of the justice which required the sacrifice, went forward together,—that is, in perfect fellowship and harmony; the son not precluding the father, as if driven, or following him as a slave, but beside him, as a companion, a friend, both going forward to a united work.

(7, 8). Isaac said, behold (here are) the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb, &c. Isaac evidently asked, this question, as yet not dreaming that he was himself the lamb of sacrifice. Abraham's answer, my son, &c., was probably intentionally evasive—he was waiting calmly for God to reveal this fact, if necessary, himself, to Isaac—yet, like many things uttered in profound ignorance on the part of the speaker of his own deeper meaning, it conveyed a double prophecy. God would not only provide a literal lamb as a sin-offering, for that particular occasion, but would provide THE LAMB, Jesus Christ, as the greater sacrifice for the sin of the world. So they went, &c.—(See remarks under v. 6.) The repetition of these words makes them doubly impressive.

(9). Abraham built an altar, &c. The sacrifice could not be offered without an altar. Christ was offered upon the bloody altar of a cross—(Heb. 13: 12, 13).

Bound Isaac his son, &c. Isaac, though called a lad, (v. 5) was really a mature man, at least twenty-five years old, and by some supposed to be over thirty. Had he not been a willing sacrifice he might easily have resisted or escaped, as his father was an aged man. But he evidently made no resistance, yielding himself willingly to his father's will. So Christ gave himself up freely to die—(Ps. 40: 7, 8; John 10: 8; Matt. 26: 42).

(10). Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife, to slay his son. His trial was complete. The sacrifice was virtually made. The greater sacrifice of Christ, Abraham's promised seed, was shown in perfect type. And now—

(11, 12). A voice from heaven calls to him—lay not thy hand upon the lad, for now I know, &c. God did not subject Abraham to this trial to assure Himself that Abraham's faith would not fail. This He knew; but neither Abraham nor Isaac knew it, and we could never have known it had the trial not been made. Neither could the wonderful prophecy of Jesus Christ, as a sin-offering, con-

cerned in it, have been given otherwise than by this, or by some other similar transaction. Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh. . . in the mount of the Lord it (what it signified) shall be seen.—or, the Lord will see or provide.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Implicit obedience to God, is the only sure test of faith. God does not often subject his people to so severe a test as He did Abraham; but all have to be tested in some way, that the fruits of their faith may appear.

God asked no more from Abraham than He was willing to give for Abraham. Whatever God asks from us falls infinitely short of what He has given for us. Abraham gave himself, as literally as man could give himself in the person of another, in Isaac. God gave Himself truly in the person of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. He will accept nothing less than a complete giving up of ourselves to Him.

Abraham in giving to God his dearest and best, proved that there was nothing he would withhold. God, in giving Christ, proves that He has with Him, freely given us all things (Rom. 8: 32; 1st Cor. 3: 21-23).

God's great gift includes all lesser gifts.

QUESTION SUMMARY

(For the Scholars.)

- (1, 2). What is meant by God did tempt Abraham? See note. Who does tempt people in the sense of leading them into sin? Is Satan the only tempter? Do wicked children ever become tempters? What did God tell Abraham to do? Did Abraham know God did not intend to let him kill Isaac? What made him, then, go so willingly to do such a dreadful thing? Because he had faith that God would bring it round all right, and that, even if he did have to kill Isaac, God would make him alive again. (Read Heb. 11: 17-19).
- (3). What did Abraham take with him?
- (5). Did Abraham expect that both he and Isaac would come again?—(See Heb. 11: 17-19).
- (6). What did Abraham give Isaac to carry? What did he carry himself?
- (7). What one thing did Isaac miss that should have been taken for a burnt-offering?
- (8, 9). What did Abraham say God would provide? Did he mean that God would provide a real lamb? He did not quite know what he did mean, but he felt sure God would provide for the burnt-offering in some way. His words were a prophecy, however, and God did provide a real lamb, as we shall soon see. What did Abraham build? What is an altar? What did he do when the altar was finished, and the wood laid in order upon it? Was Isaac a little boy?—(see note). How old was he? If he was a young man, why did he let his father bind him? Because he knew his father loved God, and would not do anything God had not told him to do. So he gave himself willingly into his father's hands. Who besides Abraham gave up His only begotten Son to die? Was Jesus, like Isaac, willing to die? Whom did Jesus die for? Do you love Jesus for being so kind as to die for you?
- (10-13) What did Abraham mean to do when he took the knife? Why did God let him do it? Because he was only trying Abraham; and when he saw Abraham was willing to obey Him, even in such a hard thing, He took it all the same as if he had really done it. Who called to Abraham to make him stop? What did he say? When Abraham looked around what did he see? Did the sheep happen to be there?—or did God send him there? When it came time for somebody to die for us did God provide another Lamb? What is that Lamb's name? What is the meaning of Jesus?—See Matt. 1: 21. Has Jesus saved you from your sins?

On a Spanish sun-dial is written, "I mark only the bright hours." This is wise. There is more sun-shine than shade, more bright than dark hours to be remembered.

Profanity never did any man the least good. No man is richer, or happier, or wiser for it. It commends no one to society; it is disgusting to refined, people and abominable to the good.

Bismarck may possibly soon meet Cardinal Howard, who is the successor of Monsigneur Jacobini as Papal Nuncio at Vienna. The object of such a meeting would be to deliberate on the Act recently passed amending the Falk Laws, which neither answer the intentions of the Prussian Government nor the wishes of the Catholics, and to bring about the recall of the ejected bishops and fill the cures of the vacant parishes. Bismarck heartily desires to put an end to the kultur-kampf, and there is no saying that he may not consent to talk over Church matters once more with some agent of the Pope at Gastein.