

International S. S. Lessons.

THE LESSON LIST

- Oct. 3. ISAAC'S PROSPERITY - Gen. xxv. 12-25. Golden Text, Prov. x. 22. Commit 23-25.
Oct. 10. JACOB AND ESAU - Gen. xxvii. 22-30. 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, 23-29. Golden Text, Prov. xxvii. 4. Commit 32-35.
Nov. 7. JOSEPH IN PRISON - Gen. xxxix. 21-23; xl. 1-5. Golden Text, Psa. xxxvii. 7. Commit 21-23.
Nov. 14. JOSEPH THE WISE RULER - Gen. xl. 41-49. Golden Text, Prov. xxii. 22. Commit 46-49.
Nov. 21. JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS - Gen. xlv. 30-34; xlv. 1-5. Golden Text, Rom. xii. 21. Commit 1-4.
Nov. 28. JACOB AND PHARAOH - Gen. xlvii. 3-12. Golden Text, Prov. xvi. 31. Commit 7-10.
Dec. 5. LAST DAYS OF JACOB - Gen. xlviii. 3-12. 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.

LESSON HELPS.

OCT. 3. Gen. 26. 12-25. Isaac's Prosperity.

GOLDEN TEXT. Prov. 10. 12. To be learned - 23-25. Time, not far from 1824 B.C.

INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.

A period of some seventy-five years intervened between the events of this lesson and those of our last. During these years, Sarah died, and was buried in the cave of Machpelah; Abraham, believing his life drawing to a close, secured a wife for Isaac from among his own kindred; after which he himself took another wife, of whom were born six sons; and, at length he died, and was buried in the cave of Machpelah by his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. In process of time two sons were born to Isaac, Esau and Jacob; some years after which event, in consequence of a famine, Isaac, as his father had done on a former occasion, went into the south country, and dwelt in Gerar, the place of his own nativity, and where his father had sojourned for many years after. We shall see by our present lesson that his stay in this country was a period of great prosperity.

LESSON NOTES.

(12, 13). Then Isaac sowed in that land. Isaac, unlike his father, Abraham, united the agricultural with the pastoral occupation; and instead of devoting his whole time to the raising and tending of flocks, sought both pleasure and profit in the culture of the soil. Abraham was bold and venturesome, Isaac was thoughtful and retiring. Abraham, through the obedience of faith, received the confirmation of the promise, - Isaac entered into the full enjoyment of its blessings. Received... an hundred fold. God had appeared to Isaac, (v. 25) for the first time, as it would appear, and, after forbidding his going down into Egypt, had renewed to him the promises formerly given to his father; and, perhaps, to encourage him and lead him the more thoroughly to value his princely inheritance, gave him, as the reward of his first efforts in agriculture this extraordinary increase. And the Lord blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great, etc. The man was great, and he went going on, and was great; until that he was exceeding great. This, certainly, is extraordinary language; and may be best understood by remembering that Isaac typified Christ; and that the language, while referring immediately to Isaac, refers with still greater force to Jesus Christ, Isaac's great Antitype. Of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end. - (See Is. 9:7; Dan. 2, 44; Luke 1:32, 33) Note: Isaac was offered up as a burnt-offering before his exceeding greatness was attained, Jesus Christ was offered up on the cross before the great "increase of his government and peace" took place.

(14). For he had possessions, etc. . . and great store of servants, or husbandry - either farm servants, or land cultivated, or both, - probably

the idea of both is included in the language. This too is interesting, viewed in relation to Christ's kingdom, as it is destined to be. The Philistines envied him. So great and prosperous a chief could not long dwell in the midst of those from whom he differed so widely without being both envied and hated. So with God's people while preserving themselves unspotted from the world, they have been both hated and persecuted.

(15) For all the wells etc. . . The Philistines had stopped them, etc. This was the outcome of their envy, and its obvious purpose was to drive Isaac away. They looked upon his gain as their loss, so they cut off his supply of water, in order to force him to leave. The custom of stopping up the wells of those whom it is intended to harass, still prevails in the east.

(16). Abimelech - a general name for the Philistine kings - said, go from us, for thou art mightier (richer) than we are. In other words, - though only a sojourner among us, you are absorbing all the wealth of the country; therefore, go! This was Isaac's own country, his by inheritance from his father, and by promise from God to himself personally. Had he been other than he was, a type of Christ, we might be surprised at his yielding so patiently to their demands; but, true to his character as the great representative of Christ, "when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

(17-10) And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, etc. This valley is supposed to be what is now the Wady el Jerur, about fifty miles south of Gerar. Here he re-opened the wells which his father had digged, and restored to them the names his father had given them. While digging here his servants came upon a fountain of living, or of springing water.

(20). This well in a land like that, was a peculiar treasure; and was, consequently, claimed very soon by the native herdsmen who opposed their using it, saying the water is ours. Here was another opportunity for Isaac to have resisted; but after naming the well Esek - contention - he gave it up also.

(21-22) Then they digged another which was also claimed by his enemies, and after naming it Sitnah - Hatred - they also relinquished it, removed still farther away, and digged another. This, either because the Philistines were satisfied with the advantages they had gained, or fearful to proceed farther with their insolent demands, they were allowed to hold in peace. So they named it Rehoboth - room - implying that at last they had found room for themselves, and their flocks where they might hope to be allowed to remain unmolested. And he said - for now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful; as though he had said - the rich plain is not ours by force or contention the Lord has given it to us and here we shall gather our harvests in peace.

The character of Isaac is very generally misunderstood. Because he yielded to the unjust claims of his persecutors, he has been called tame-spirited, and wanting in personal courage, neither of which charges seems to be justified by the facts in the case. He held his right to possess the land from God, - he could trust God to maintain that right. As soon as he felt that the Lord had made room for him, he gave Him the glory, and waited calmly till He should also give him the fruits of his labor. It was not long before he was permitted to see that he had made no mistake, for Abimelech soon sued for a treaty of friendship; (see the remainder of the chapter), thus proving "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." It would be better if all Christians were more like Isaac.

(23.) He went up from thence - probably, however, not for some time, during which he doubtless increased so much in both wealth and power that Abimelech deemed it prudent to enter into a treaty with him. Beer Sheba. Whether this was the old well dug and named by Abraham, (ch. 21:81.) and opened and renamed by Isaac on the occasion of his forming a similar treaty with the Philistine King, or another to which Isaac gave the old name -

Beer Sheba - cannot now be determined. There are, at the present time, two principal wells about a hundred yards apart, and five smaller ones in that same locality.

(24). And the Lord appeared unto him the same night. God took the opportunity to come to Isaac again, when his heart probably was heavy, and his mind oppressed with anxiety in regard to his future sojourn among that envious and deceitful people, and renewed to him the assurances of His personal favor and protection. Fear not, &c. Isaac would have had very much to fear, if God had not been his protector and friend. For my servant Abraham's sake; - not that God did not love Isaac who was also His servant, but His original promise was made to Abraham; and Isaac was looked upon as in Abraham, the great head of the family of which Isaac was a part. So Christians are blessed for Christ's sake, who is the great Head of the Church.

(25). Builded an altar; called upon the name of the Lord; pitched his tent; digged a well. Isaac's first care was to erect an altar, - his second was to worship at it. After these, family and personal wants were attended to. Isaac made it his first business to honor God. Christ says, - if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.

"Make thou His service thy delight, He'll make thy wants His care."

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE LESSON.

Isaac, though very rich, did not despise honest labor. He wrought with a diligent spirit, and God rewarded his toil with an abundant increase.

Isaac's wealth was no fortunate accident. He waited upon God, and kept His way; and God exalted him to inherit the land.

Isaac, though in a position to retaliate upon his persecutors, did not do so. God had promised him His favor and protection - he believed the promise, and God rewarded his confidence and trust by making him exceeding great, even in the presence of his enemies.

"Let envy alone, and it will punish itself." is a maxim every one may safely follow. Isaac, without knowing the maxim, acted upon the principle it embodies; and, in due time, the envious Philistines came and sued for his friendship.

Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Isaac, though never having heard this command of Christ, acted upon the principle it enjoins, and God added to him every needful blessing.

QUESTION SUMMARY.

(For the Children.)

(12). Was Isaac a farmer? What was he besides? How big a farm had he? The whole land of Palestine. Did God let Isaac occupy it all? No, He let the Philistines, those envious people live on part, and there were other nations lived there as well. What was the yield of his first harvest in Gerar? What is meant by a hundred fold? (13). What did Isaac become? (14). What did he own? How did the Philistines feel towards him? What is it to envy? It is to feel sorry when another gets something you have not, and to want to get it away from him.

(15). What did the Philistines do to spite Isaac? (16). Was King Abimelech Isaac's friend? How do you know? (17). Did Isaac go? Yes, he would not quarrel with them, for God had said He would be with him, and he who has God for his companion cannot afford to quarrel. Who did Isaac act like then? How did Jesus do in the same circumstances? (see 1st Peter 2: 23) What does He tell us to do, when people treat us ill? (see Matt 5: 44). (18). What had the Philistines already done? Did Isaac open the wells again? What names did he give the wells? Why had the Philistines stopped up the wells? (19). What did Isaac's servants find when digging in the valley? (20). Who claimed it? Did Isaac let them have it? What name had he called it? What does Esek mean? Why did he call it that? (21). Did they claim the next? What was its name? What does Sitnah mean? (22). Where did he go from Sitnah? Did the Philistines let him alone there? What did he name the next well? Why? (23). After some time, where did Isaac go? Who came visit Him soon after he arrived at Beer Sheba? Would you like to have the Lord speak so kindly to you? Well, if you will be His humble and obedient servant, as Isaac was, every precious promise in the Bible will be yours as truly as this was Isaac's. (25). What four things did Isaac do afterwards? Did he make his tent and dig his well first? No, he made his altar, and worshipped God first. What does Jesus tell us to do first? (see Matt 6: 33). What does that mean? What if we always seek first of everything to do as He would have us, then He will always give us the things He sees that we need.

* Parents will aid their children very much by encouraging them to learn their questions, and helping them to do so.

Mission Notes.

-Eighteen years ago, says the Foreign Missionary, the first Protestant church was organized in Rio Janeiro, and two persons received on confession. Since that time nearly three hundred have joined this one organization, mostly converts from Rome. The great lack is preachers of the Word.

-Mtesa, the Emperor of Uganda, who, through Stanley, the explorer, begged for Christian teachers who were immediately sent by the English Church Missionary Society, has renounced Christianity and gone back to paganism, worshipping Mokassa, the God of Lake Nyanza, whose spirit is supposed to reside in an old woman who lives on the lake.

-Rev. J. L. Green, of the London Missionary Society, writing from Tahiti, says: "The restrictions which have contracted our labours and those of our predecessors ever since the establishment of the Protectorate here, are now nearly all removed, and I have virtually nearly 3,000 of the natives of Tahiti placed under my direction, in an ecclesiastical point of view."

-The London Missionary Society says after the baptism of the Queen of Madagascar, and the dedication of the Chapel Royal, just built, the event was commemorated by setting at liberty all the State prisoners who have been in chains, since the beginning of the present reign, for the part they took in a conspiracy to overturn the government. The dedication services lasted a fortnight, sometimes eight meetings being held during the day, with an attendance of over 3,000 people.

-The Missionary Herald also tells how, some twenty years ago, the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel started a movement in the Sandwich Islands to bring over the converts to High Church ceremonies. The simple people were taught that the religion they had embraced lacked apostolic sanction and sacramental grace. The sumptuous cathedral which the High Church Bishop was to build has only risen a few inches above the ground, and not a penny has been given by the people of Hawaii for the support of the Bishop. Evidently the Bishop will have to find another field for High Churchism.

AND I ALWAYS SHALL.

The gracefulness with which some people yield a point of controversy from which they are fairly driven, is illustrated by a story told of a good old man in Western Massachusetts. It was in the days when Sunday night was just coming to be observed instead of Saturday night as Sabbath time. Good old Dr. D., wise and firm, sought by all means to bring his people to uniform practice in the matter. He finally secured a church vote that all would do as the majority directed. When the sense of the church was taken, it was found that a large majority were in favor of keeping Sunday night, and so it was supposed to be settled. Brother G. had been the pillar of the Saturday night party; his well-known obstinacy had been the principal difficulty in the way of the change; but he had voted with the rest to abide by the decision of the majority. After the vote was taken he arose in his place, looked solemnly over the assembled brethren and said, slowly and with the emphasis of deep feeling half-suppressed: "I'm not at all strenuous about this, brethren, but I always have observed Saturday night, and - Always shall." Conscience is a good thing, and will is a good thing; but will in the place and claiming the privileges and authority of conscience, is one of the toughest problems the grace of God ever has to solve in making straight the ways of the Lord in the earth. - Congregationalist.