

the Jews delivered Christ to Pilate to be crucified, Matt. 27:18. Joseph was sold into Egypt through envy, Acts 7:9. The Jews assaulted Paul through envy, Acts 17:5. Envy is one of "the works of the flesh," Gal. 5:19-21. It is hostile to love, 1 Cor. 13:4. (b) They gave practical expression to their envy by dastardly actions: they stopped wells—filled them with earth, v. 15. What is in the heart will out. (Matt. 15:19.) We cannot, without injury to ourselves and to others, and without sinning against God, cherish envy or any evil thoughts, 1 John 2:11; 3:15. (c) They moved the king to bid Isaac depart. The feelings and deeds of his subjects were doubtless known to him, and led him to say to the man they envied and persecuted, "Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we," v. 16. This may have been a feigned compliment, so common among Orientals, or an honest expression of alarm.

3. *Isaac's peace-making actions.* (a) He quietly yielded to the king's request. There is no hint that he resented it, threatened resistance, or even remonstrated against the injustice and cruelty of the king's subjects in depriving him, his servants, and flocks, of the water supply from wells dug by his father Abraham. (b) He peacefully removed to the valley of Gerar (v. 17), where "he digged again the wells" (v. 18) destroyed by his enemies. The hardships suffered by him and his flocks for want of water, and his forbearance in not inflicting merited punishment on the vindictive Philistines deserve special notice. (c) He re-opened the wells dug by the servants of Abraham, and restored the old names in token of filial veneration for his father. This was commendable. (d) For peace' sake he gave up two new wells—one of them a flowing spring, vs. 19-22. Thus he acted throughout in the spirit enjoined by St. Paul, Rom. 12:18.

4. *Isaac's devout spirit.* (a) He recognized God's hand in ending the persecutions he suffered. "The Lord hath made room for us," v. 22. (b) He removed from the country of the Philistines to a sacred place—Beer-sheba. Here Abraham had worshipped

God (21:33), and near by God appeared to Jacob, 28:10-15. (c) He set up the public worship of God, who appeared to him and renewed the covenant promises given to Abraham. He first built an altar, and then digged a well—first showed his fealty to God, and then attended to his physical necessities. "Seek ye first, etc. (Matt. 6:33).

### For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

By The Editor

It may be well to include in the lesson a brief outline of Isaac's whole career.

#### I. A TROUBLOUS MORNING.

His very birth long delayed (Review the promises in chs. 12, 13, 15, 17, 18). At last the son is born. Then follows Ishmael's mocking of the boy (21:9) and the family jarring it caused; then the weird scene on Mt. Moriah, when the boy, grown now almost to manhood, was called to face an awful death (ch. 22). In this latter incident the obedient, trustful, yielding disposition of Isaac is seen; also his serene faith in God.

#### II. A CALM NOONDAY.

With his arrival at manhood the clouds had disappeared from Isaac's horizon. He is his father's heir; a lovely and beloved bride had come to him from the distant home of his kindred. (The story is idyllic, ch. 24.) Twin boys were born and grew to manhood. The famine, it is true, drove him to Gerar, but Gerar was not far away, and God gave him special promise of protection and blessing (26:1-5), and fulfilled His promise in a rich harvest (v. 12), and the increase of all his possessions (vs. 13, 14). Most men are spoiled by prosperity, become proud and tyrannous. Not so Isaac. The king of Gerar, fearing his growing power, said, "Go from us" (v. 16), and he went at once and peacefully (v. 17). The herdmen of Gerar fought for the wells which he had digged, and rather than strive, he surrendered them (vs. 19-21). Perhaps Old Testament story does not present a finer instance of the "charity" which "suffereth long, and is kind," which "seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked," which "beareth all things . . . endureth all things." (1 Cor. 13:4, 5, 7.) Show the scholars how closely