

marriage and his home. *The Lord appeared to him the same night.* He had acted as the truly godly act, and the Lord will now give him further encouragement. *I am the God of Abraham thy father.* The covenant made with Abraham therefore abides. *Fear not.* Man of peace though he be, he shall triumph over his enemies, if God be with him. *For my servant Abraham's sake.* The mercies of godly parents descend to pious children.

V. 25. *And he builded an altar there; as a*

grateful response to God's goodness, and to provide for worship. *Pitched his tent there.* It was hallowed ground to his father and now to himself. *There Isaac's servants digged a well;* in addition to the one dug by Abraham. Prosperity still attended him. Here our lesson leaves the peace-loving Isaac. Alas! strife is soon to break out within his own household, and the father's old age is to be embittered by envy and contention between his twin sons.

APPLICATION

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And the man waxed great, v. 13. Isaac's prosperity is now at the full flood. At best, however, his life was uneventful. He is known chiefly as the son of Abraham and the father of Jacob and Esau. But we should "thank God for putting some very ordinary, commonplace men in His gallery of Scripture portraits," for quiet lives are generally the happiest and often the most fruitful, even as

"The times of quiet and unbroken peace
Are for a nation times of blessedness."

The Philistines envied him, v. 14. It was his worldly possessions, not his holiness of character, that the Philistines envied. It is not often that the world envies those who are strong in character and in holiness. They who desire the religious strength of others cannot be said to envy, for envy is only possible when the desired blessings are unattainable. All of us may have a pure heart and a holy character, if we only want them. If we hunger and thirst after righteousness we shall be filled. (Matt. 5: 6.) However, the envy of the world is usually directed to those who have many earthly possessions and honors.

Envy is *wrong*, because it displays a discontented spirit, which does not stop to consider all the blessings which surround us. If, like the dial, we only marked the sunny hours, we should never have cause to envy the lot of others. Envy is also *uncharitable*, seeing that it cannot rejoice in the prosperity of others, and cannot learn the lesson of loving our neighbor. Envy is also a *mistake*,

because it spends its feeling for that which is naught, and wastes precious thought and time that might otherwise be well used. Envy is also *foolish*, because those whom we envy are often less happy than we are ourselves. How glorious a thing it is to be thoroughly happy with the blessings which God has bestowed upon us in our different conditions of life. "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Phil. 4: 11.)

All the wells . . . the Philistines had . . . filled them with earth, v. 15. The "dog-in-the-manger" policy which envy is so apt to follow. They cannot use the wells themselves and will prevent others from using them.

And he called the name of the well Esek, v. 20. Isaac's work seems to have been the preparation of wells for his flocks. He gained this by struggle, and the names were left to tell the story of the strife. There are many blessings that come to us in this world only after we have fought for them—our Esek is our well. The scholar toils for his knowledge, and the husbandman for his harvest, and the soldier for the victory. So said our Lord to the young man who sought the treasure of eternal life: "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross, and follow me." (Mark 10: 21.)

And he called the name of it Sitnah, v. 21. Hatred was once again the price of the well; the emblem of strife. Things that have to