

The Quiet Hour.

Isaac and the Peacemaker.

S.S. Lesson for 1st Sept.: Genesis 26:12-25.

GOLDEN TEXT:—**Matt. 5:9.** Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

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 the 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 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 be purchased only at the expense of

incurring the hatred of others, are frequently obtained at too great a price. However, there are occasions in which we must be willing to brook even the lasting dislike of those around us. It is a severe test of some to have to do unpopular things. Many would rather do without the water than have to own a Sitnah.

He called the name of it Reboboth, v. 22. At last he obtains a well without opposition. There is room for all. Usually there is enough room for all in this world if things were only equally divided. There is enough grain to give everyone a share, and the rivers and wells are sufficient to supply all with water. The trouble is the unequal division. One of the works of the Christian Church is to equalize things, to break down the great distinctions between rich and poor, and to cause none to want. There is not room for all, when one monopolizes far more than his share.

And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, v. 24. God would have Isaac remember the great possession that he had in his religion. "This was better than all the wells of earth. The trouble with many religious people is that they will not trust God. One tells of a small steam packet which was crossing a stormy bay. Her engine suddenly stopped. For a little while the peril was great. An old lady pushed to the captain to ask whether there was any danger, "Madam," he replied, "we must trust in God." "O dear," she cried, "has it come to that?" A good many Christians are like the terrified lady. In times of peril, they are willing to trust in everything—except God. He is their last resource. Yet no one but He can either give them peace, or keep them peaceful.

Builted an altar . . . pitched his tent . . . digged a well, v. 25. A significant order; the altar first, for the worship and service of God is our first and highest duty. (Matt. 6:33.) When the altar has been built, the tent may be pitched with a joyous hand, for that home is likely to be blessed where God is recognized. The digging of the well—enlargement of borders—follows almost as a matter of course. "They shall prosper, that love thee," says the Psalmist of the holy city, where God's temple stood and God's worship was observed, and which did indeed prosper, so long as it was faithful to God.

No Time For Mysteries.

BY JOSEPH PARKER, D. D.

If life is short, then I think it will be wiser on my part to leave the mysterious alone; I think so. Why so? Because life is short; we cannot do everything; we had better, therefore, make a selection, and attend to those things we can get hold of, and work to the soul's best advantage. Why should I, with so few days at command, trouble myself seriously and to the possible destruction of my soul by constructing theories about the constitution of the Godhead? Why should I break up my life by trying to reconcile the various theories of the creation and existence of the universe? I have not time; if I had talent, genius, inspiration in these directions, I have not time, I am but a pilgrim, I can tarry but a night: O tell me what is the thing to be done now?

The New Covenant—A Lost Secret.*

VII. The Terms of this New Covenant: (c) Infilling or Power?

BY ANNA ROSS.

A few years ago, Dr. MacKay, of Formosa, spent a hurried two hours in our home. Before leaving, he knelt down with us. One petition of that prayer has ever since seemed like an open door into the larger treasures of the kingdom. He asked that the spirit of God might take possession of us—might so take possession of us—that He should fill and animate and control our human spirit as our human spirit fills and animates and controls our mortal body.

It was a vast petition. Yet it was simply asking what God has covenanted to give in this third, this crowning promise of the new covenant, "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." I will put my spirit within you, and He shall so fill and animate and control your human spirit that you shall work out His will as your mortal body now works out the will of your human spirit. Thus the Lord's Prayer shall be answered, and His "will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven." Truly we are not straitened in Him. We are straitened in ourselves, because we will not forsake our own thoughts—our miserably small and meagre thoughts—of what God's salvation is.

The form of this crowning promise given in Hebrews is just as full and glorious, "I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Shall we not look up in His face and answer, "Do it Lord. Do as Thou hast said. Do as Thou hast covenanted."

This is the culminating promise of the covenant purchased for us by the blood of our Redeemer. We have handed to us at every Communion the appointed symbol of our covenant right to this promise as well as the other two.

If these are our covenant rights in Christ, why are they not universally fulfilled in Christian experience? It is not because the Church has forgotten that she has fallen heir to them? She does not know them, she does not claim them, and she does not enjoy them, and so she is still a failure and the world a desert.

She sees the sacramental wine poured out at the Communion feast. She hears the words, "This cup is the new testament in my blood. Drink ye all of it." She takes the symbol into her hands and puts it to her lips, but forgets that it means a Covenant, not merely forgiveness—a Covenant of partnership with God, not merely protection from His wrath—that it means cleansing, life, and power for victorious service. Because she has forgotten that the wine means a whole Covenant bequeathed to her by Christ, the Church is still a failure and the world is still a desert.

Let her lay hold on this Covenant, and faith shall become triumphant and victorious, and she shall be exactly like her faith, triumphant and victorious too.

The little book—The New Covenant, a Lost Secret—out of which these extracts are taken, will be ready in a few weeks. Any one wishing to order a copy can do so through the "Dominion Presbyterian." Price \$1.00, to be paid when the book is received.

A woman whose pastor asked after her health replied dolefully: "I feel very well, but I always feel bad when I feel well, because I know I am going to feel worse afterward."