

“they who be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” What a high inducement to unwavering devotedness to his cause should it be to think of enjoying his gracious smiles and approving love, while we work for him; and when our work is done, to share in the welcome address from his lips, “Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord.”

MONITOR.

THE BEST BIRTHRIGHT.

“Looking diligently, lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.”

The story of Esau selling his birthright, is a sad memorial of sin and folly. This birthright entitled him, according to ancient law, to a double portion, in the division of the paternal inheritance, and it made him the heir of the promise of divine privilege given to his father by God. In this latter view, Esau's birthright was peculiarly valuable, and it is for despising it, in this sense, that he is branded as a profane person. The history of the transaction calls up before us an affecting scene. We see Esau come into his father's tent, faint and weary, perhaps, by the labor of the chase. His eye falls on his brother Jacob, just sat down to his mid-day meal, and he covets a share of the tempting dish. He could have had abundance of other food, but he had set his heart on this, and he will have his desire. The price of his gratification is named. It is large—it is fitted to recall him to reflection—it is a test of his character. He hears, he thinks of it; he exaggerates his necessities, and speaks as if his life depended, not on procuring food but on receiving *this* food from his brother. He depreciates his birthright, and alleges that, being at the point to die, this was of no value, just as if a divine privilege was for the body alone, and could yield no advantage beyond the present life. He therefore instantly strikes the bargain, eagerly takes the morsel of meat, and, mayhap, thinks for the moment that he has the best of it, in the profane exchange. “He did eat, and drank, and rose up, and went his way; thus Esau despised his birthright.”

The history furnishes a warning for all times. The Apostle draws from it the solemn admonition we have cited as the subject of our present remarks. He warns all Gospel hearers to look diligently, lest any should exemplify the like passion for present indulgences, and the like profaneness as Esau displayed. That this warning may have point and force, a resemblance must be assumed to exist between the privileges of Esau, as the heir of covenant promise and those of Gospel hearers, as recipients of the offers of salvation. If there were no analogy here, there could be no meaning in the counsel to take heed not to be profane, like Esau, in despising divine privileges. But when this resemblance is admitted, the admonition comes home to every heart. It sets before us, then, in striking light, these solemn truths—the privilege of an offered salvation is every man's birthright; that privilege may be bartered away for present indulgence. This is a sin, against which all who possess the privilege require to be on their guard. To the first of these topics we request, at present, the earnest attention of our readers.

The *privilege* of an offered salvation is every man's birthright.

It was for despising his birthright, that Esau is here set forth as a warning, and the points of the warning lie in this, that every one among us who hears the Gospel enjoys the offers of pardoning mercy as his birthright. It is not meant by this, that God is under any obligation to provide salvation for our sinful race, or that any man possesses a natural right to receive the offer of it. This is not an obligation on God's part, but a mercy. It is not a natural but a desired right with us. It is freely given of God, and hence we learn, it is