

the end of the world.

V. 29.—(See Deut. iv. 24 and ix. 3.)—If we cling to sin that fire will consume us which otherwise would have purified us as gold and silver are purified.

LESSONS.

This passage is full of most precious doctrines and practical lessons: (V. 14 is itself a sermon.)

1. All Christians have a heavenly birth-right; Take heed lest you barter it away for any, even the most fascinating and tempting, advantages.

2. There is such a thing as repenting with bitter anguish when repentance will be of no use. Esau might have got without tears what all his tears cannot now secure for him.

3. Spiritual things are of infinitely greater value than temporal things. The "Mess of pottage" may come to you under many different disguises. Beware of them!

4. A single action may decide our fate for time and for eternity. That one bargain of Esau's was his ruin.

5. From the terrors of the old dispensation and the advantages of the new infer the unspeakable danger of trifling with the gospel. See ver. 25.

6. The "Kingdom" of Christ cannot be moved, even though the earth pass away. We should therefore strive to become members of it. No other means of salvation will ever be established on earth.

7. God is most merciful to those who serve him with reverence (modesty) and godly fear; but he is a consuming fire to all who despise or pervert the gospel or who pay no heed to it.

DOCTRINE TO BE PROVED:

Danger of despising spiritual things.—Heb. ii. 2 and iii. 8-10; Gal. vi. 8; Psalm cvi. 24, &c.

THIRD SABBATH.

SUBJECT: *The Covenant Blessing.*—Gen. xxvii. 1-29.

V. 1.—Isaac, now far advanced in years, wishes to bestow his dying benediction upon his favorite son, Esau. This was in opposition to the will of God, who had expressly told Rebekah at the birth of the twin-brothers that the elder should serve the younger. Gen. xxv. 13. But Isaac shall be frustrated in his purpose. Imagine you see the aged Patriarch—his locks white as snow—his eyes dim with age—his whole appearance venerable.

V. 2.—He was probably about 137 years of age; and lived at least 40 years afterwards.

V. 3.—*Venison*. The word in the original Hebrew signifies game taken in the

chase—in hunting. Shepherds in the East never scruple to take of their flock for the entertainment of strangers. They not unfrequently manage to supply their own wants by hunting. Hence the patriarch's desire for *venison*.

V. 4.—The blessing of the covenant was no meaningless ceremony. It was necessary to impart it with due solemnity. According to Oriental custom the eating of the savoury meat provided by Esau would give *validity* to the blessing: to be communicated to him by his father.

Vv. 5-10.—Rebekah overhears the directions which Isaac had given to Esau. She resolves to thwart their designs, and secure the blessing for her favorite son—Jacob. Some consider that she was prompted by a *divine impulse*; but this opinion is incompatible with the deception which she practised in accomplishing her purpose. God had designed the patriarchal blessing for Jacob, and would have taken his own way to bestow it upon him. Rebekah takes the matter into her own hands, and actuated by mere favoritism for her darling boy, endeavors to accomplish God's purpose respecting him, by means, and in a manner, at direct variance with reason and revelation.

Vv. 11-12.—However desirous Jacob might be to secure the blessing of his father he could not enter into the plan proposed by his mother without some compunctions of conscience. What if the trickery should be detected! Then a curse, not a blessing, would fall upon his head. He knew the mind of Jehovah as afterwards expressed in Deut. xxvii. 18.

V. 13.—Who would like to assume the terrible responsibility which Rebekah here imposes upon herself.

V. 14.—Rebekah could so prepare the young kids by various condiments that it would not be easy to distinguish between the *savoury meat* thus prepared and *venison*.

Vv. 15-19.—Notice the three-fold deception which Jacob, at the instigation of his mother, practises upon his blind father: 1st. He unequivocally affirms that he is his first-born son, Esau. 2nd. He assures him that the *savoury meat* which he has brought him is *venison*, and taken in hunting. 3rd. He clothes himself with his brother's raiment and covers his hands with the skins of kid. How difficult it is to accomplish that which is right when wrong measures are resorted to.

Vv. 20-27.—Notwithstanding the well wrought artifice the patriarch is somewhat suspicious. He wonders how the *venison* had been captured and prepared so speedily. Here again Jacob deliberately falsifies. His voice, however, nearly betrays him. What strange emotions must have arisen in the breast of Isaac as he started at its sound,