

help liking a man of Esau's stamp,—brave, frank, bubbling over with vitality,—any more than we can help despising one like Jacob. But both need our help, and the one we admire needs it most. Here are two pieces of ore, which has the gold in it? "Oh, that one all glittering with yellow specks, of course," you say. But you are mistaken. I put them in the fire. See, the bright gold comes from the dingy piece, and the other is burnt up smelling like sulphur. Which of these pieces represents Jacob, and which Esau?

II. THE TRANSACTION. 29. Jacob sold pottage—"sod" is the past tense of "seethe" to boil, and "pottage" is the same word as "porridge," but includes soup, or anything boiled in a pot. Jacob's soup was made of lentils—a grain resembling a flattened pea or bean. In growing it resembles the pea, but is only about a foot and a half high. It is cheap, nutritious and palatable. Very tempting to a hungry hunter. The color of the pottage was a brownish red. The Hebrew word for "red" is "Edom." Esau was called Edom because of his ruddy complexion, as well as from the pottage for which he sold his birthright. Jacob would have deserved no great thanks if he had given his hungry brother all the broth and made a fresh potful for himself. On the other hand, if Esau had felt as he should about such a thing as his birthright, he would have said, when Jacob asked him to sell it. "Keep your soup. My birthright is not for sale at any price. I'll find some one less stingy than you, or I'll wait till I can prepare something for myself." A man who could walk home, would not die of hunger for an hour or two at least. Both brothers were wrong, but Esau was the worst of the two, for he should have held his birthright dearer than life a thousand times over. It did not mean merely, the headship of the tribe after Isaac's death, and a double portion of the inheritance. These he might have parted with, although it would have been disgraceful. But he was, as Isaac's heir, the heir of the covenant, stood in relations of holy friendship with God, and was the ancestor of the promised Messiah. The man who would sell these privileges would sell his soul, and all heaven, if he could, for present satisfaction, pleasure, or worldly advantage. Jacob was mean to take advantage of his brother, but he was wise and good enough to hold these as priceless. He would have given Esau any thing he liked to ask. It wasn't his fault altogether that Esau was satisfied to take a bowl of soup for them. It was the submitting of such things to barter, and disposing of them by a bargain of any kind that was the shamefullest aspect of the shameful transaction, and here the most shame lies with the man who would sell at all. But are there not Esaus still? Persons who sell health, for the pleasures of eating and drinking and late hours. Character, for money or position. self-respect, for empty honors or covetousness; their Christian privileges, for the pleasure the world gives. Everything that keeps you from becoming a true Christian is a price received for your birthright.

To the Scholar.—Study the lesson carefully, turning up the marginal references and reading the "Daily Portions." Then close your Bible and try to answer in writing the questions following *without accepting aid from any quarter* after you have begun to write. Then bring this leaflet to Sabbath School with you on the day of its date. If you cannot come, fill out the blank and send the leaflet (with the answers written out) to your teacher by some friend, or by mail, and you will receive credit for the work done as if you had been present. If your excuse is satisfactory, you will not lose in record of attendance.

- 1—Which brother was the eldest? (3)
- 2—What occupation did he follow? (3)
- 3—What did he sell to his brother? (3)
- 4—What did he get for it? (3)
- 5—What did the birthright include? (7)
- 6—Why was he willing to part with it? (6)

Name _____

Dear Teacher,—Please excuse my absence from Sabbath School to-day, I cannot come because _____ I have read the "Daily Portions" and answered the questions as well as I could. I have committed to memory _____ verses in addition to the Golden Text, and _____ Questions in the Catechism and have recited them to _____ I was at church _____

I send with this my Weekly Offering of _____ cents.