

he can get, although he burns with anger and jealousy towards the one who has outstripped him.

The man with the one talent could not help his start. His master controlled that. But he could help his finish. He was "unprofitable," because he spent his time lamenting his handicap, and envying his fellow servants.

A finer sight is hard to find, than to see a second-rate person toil until he is the peer of the one with better gifts but less fidelity to duty.

Isaac's refusal to reverse his blessing teaches a fine lesson in loyalty to one's word. We should be careful about giving our word, but when it is given we should be careful not to be false to it.

THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

By Rev. W. H. Smith, Ph.D., Fredericton, N.B.

Begin by discussing the characters of Esau and Jacob respectively. Bring out the natural disposition of the two men,—Esau the more attractive, frank, impulsive, generous and passionate. He was also improvident, with low conceptions of duty and the authority of the will of God. Jacob was mean, scheming, ever ready to take advantage of others. He was also strong, able to see the wider meaning of life and willing to strive for it. He possessed the power of strong affection, and recognized the overruling will of God. Take up:

1. *Ambition supplanting weakness*, ch. 25 : 27-34. Bring out the meaning of the "birthright," as carrying with it priestly functions, the promise (Gen. 3 : 15 ; 12 : 3), and the double portion, Deut. 21 : 15-17. Discuss Esau's impulsive demand for food, his reckless disregard of his home privileges, responsibilities and spiritual endowment of his birthright,—all forming a wretched exhibition of weakness and indifference to higher things. Turn now to Jacob's vision of the importance of the birthright, and his scheming ambition to take advantage of Esau's needs. The lessons to enforce and apply are : (a) the great danger of cherishing an unworthy view of life's supreme values. Weakness always springs from lack of appreciation of what is worth while. (b) The power of ambition in making the end justify the means. Ambition, unless guided by high ideals, soon becomes the enemy of manhood.

2. *The tragedy of a divided home*. Make clear by questioning : (a) Isaac's preference for Esau, and his determination that his

favorite son shall have the blessing, even against what had been prophesied concerning him, and the fact that Esau had deliberately sold his birthright. (b) Rebekah's preference for Jacob and her determination to deliberately deceive Isaac. Show that each of the four characters concerned played an unworthy part and each suffered on account of the wrong-doing.

3. *The penalty of wrong-doing*. Point out the unworthy part of Jacob and Rebekah in the stolen blessing. Follow out the consequences in the banishment of Jacob, with the anguish of soul caused to Isaac and Rebekah. Must not their home have been a very unhappy one ? Now take up the effect upon Esau, in his bitter experience (v. 34 and Heb. 12 : 17) and absolute hopelessness, anger without penitence. Trace the effect upon Isaac who found he had been deceived. Show the retribution upon Rebekah, who lost her favorite son.

Turn to wider truth. Esau, with his unspiritual nature, was unfitted for God's purpose, and was set aside. Jacob had greater possibilities, and was trained through severe discipline. What do we see in each to admire and follow, and what to condemn and shun ?

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

By Rev. A. Wylie Mahon, B.D., St. Andrews, N.B.

Question the class about the twin brothers, Jacob and Esau,—how they differed in disposition and character, how the one was a favorite of the father, the other of the mother (ch. 25 : 27, 28), how Esau sold his birthright (ch. 25 : 29-34), how Isaac when he was old and blind, planned, in spite of everything, to bestow the blessing of the birthright upon his favorite, Esau, ch. 27 : 1-4. The printed portion of our Lesson tells what happened next.