

to rub the rust of our virtues, stormy winds to strengthen the fibre of our convictions, and resolutions, the sharp whirling wheels that polish the jewels of character. They are the bitter medicine which cure us of our moral maladies. By way of the cross we come to the crown, and in this union of burden and blessing we forget the pain.

SUGGESTIONS.

1. Use blackboard to write outline of our lesson.
2. Have the psalm or part of it read responsively by two sections of the leaguers, after the fashion of the temple choirs.
3. It would be effective if some one would memorize, and at the proper time repeat the poem, "Lean Hard."

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OCTOBER 25.—"A BAD BARGAIN."

Genesis 25, 24-25.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., Oct. 14. Our heritage. Heb. 9: 11-20
Tues., Oct. 15. Forgetting the giver. Ps. 103: 1-7
Wed., Oct. 16. Following one's own will. Ps. 103: 1-7
Thurs., Oct. 17. Less than we seek. Job 17: 6; Prov. 14: 12
Fri., Oct. 18. An unprofitable exchange. Isa. 55: 1, 2; Jer. 2: 4-8
Sat., Oct. 19. God's gift, sin's wages. Rom. 6: 12-23

Isaac was fifty-nine, and Abraham 159 when Esau and Jacob were born. At the birth of these two sons of Isaac, the younger—Jacob—took hold of the heel of Esau, as if endeavoring to secure for himself the place that rightly belonged to the first-born son of the family. From this was his name Jacob—"one who takes by the heel," "one who endeavors to trip up or supplant."

THE BARGAIN MAKERS.

Never were two brothers more different in their natures, their choices, their lives. Esau and Jacob were nurtured under the same good influences, for the lives of Isaac and Rebekah, their parents, were far above the ordinary standards of lives of their times. Their faults were negative rather than positive. Isaac loved peace, and was a man of prayer, but lacking in energy and enterprise. His life was uneventful, without great plans or ambitions. There was more force in Rebekah, and she seemed to centre her efforts on the advancement of her favorite son, Jacob.

Esau, the first-born, had precedence over his brother Jacob. But Esau cared more for his own pleasure than the headship of the family. He was good-natured, kindly, affectionate, but bold and hasty; he loved the freedom of the fields, and was passionately fond of hunting, caring more for such a life than one that brought to him the burdens and duties of the head of the house. He really stamped these characteristics on his descendants. They never cared for the cities or for civilization. They were the wanderers of the desert. Like Esau they were dwellers in tents. Although they inherited some of the religious tendencies and beliefs of their ancestors, they would not be bound by a religion of law or of forms.

Jacob was a quiet, domestic man, one who was much at home and who took his share of the burdens. He was selfish and crafty, and early saw the more favored position of Esau as holding the future honors and blessings of the family. Constancy, persistence, dogged tenacity is a striking feature of his character. With all the contrary qualities, he was chiefly distinguished by his desire for the friendship of God, and his sensibility to spiritual influences. While we cannot admire his sharp bargaining, and his miserable deception, we cannot forget that his mother had much to do with his

training and his conduct. And when he found himself alone, his spiritual nature took the ascendancy, and his course in life was largely dominated by the commands of God with his soul.

There were great possibilities in each of these characters. Esau might have become an attractive and a useful man, using his strength to defend virtue and protect innocence; his courage, energy, and skill to war against all evils, and to defend his home from every threatening evil; his healthy open-heartedness and good nature to attract men to the true religion and pure morality. What a splendid character he might have produced. On the other hand, Jacob was a natural born business man—a noble and splendid talent when rightly used. He knew a good bargain by instinct. He had far-reaching plans. He could have been a mighty influence for good. He could have developed many plans for the deepening of spirituality among his tribe. He could have found means for the spread of true religion. He possessed the nature that could climb the heavenly ladder towards God, and stand on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Esau shows how the most lovable and kindly of natures may be ruined by following its own bent of freedom and pleasure. But Jacob shows what God can make out of the most unpromising and uninteresting natures. What a noble statue can be carved by a master from a most angular, irregular, ill-shaped stone.

THE BARGAIN.

Among the Hebrews the first-born enjoyed special rights and privileges. These were a double portion of the father's inheritance (Deut. xxi, 15-17); the official authority and headship of the family; and the function of priesthood in the family. Esau failed to properly value this birthright. He preferred the present to the future; the mess of pottage that was in sight to the distant that was right, that could not be his until his father's death. It was a sadly near-sighted act. It surely was a bad bargain that he made. And how he repented of his folly when too late (Gen. xxvii, 34, 35; Heb. 12: 17).

The price paid for this birthright by Jacob was a mess of red pottage—a bowl of lentil soup. Surely a price for such valuable rights and privileges. Jacob was not only unbrotherly and selfish, he drove a hard, mean, unfeeling bargain. Taking advantage of Esau's fatigue, he persuaded him for a morsel of meat to not only convey to him the priceless boon of the birthright, but to confirm the sale by a solemn oath before Jehovah. His conduct is just as reprehensible as that of Esau, who failed sufficiently to appreciate the worth of the birthright.

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. "We barter life for pottage; sell true bliss

For wealth or power, for pleasure or renown;

Thus, Esau-like, our Father's blessing miss,

Thy wash with fruitless tears our faded crown."

2. Three bad bargains: Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage; Judas selling his Lord for thirty pieces of silver; the person who "gives the world in exchange for his soul."

3. The weakness and exhaustion of the body is a time of temptation. Jesus was tempted when he was an hungered, so was Esau. Jesus kept his birthright; Esau sold his away.

4. Esau's penitence was occasioned by a realization of what he had forfeited, but was not because of his sins. Today we find people often sorry for the consequences of sin. True penitence is a godly sorrow for the sin itself.

5. Those who obtain right things in a wrong way always gain curses with the blessing.

6. It is said that every man has his price. Esau was easily bought. Job could not be bought. At what price do you value your character—your birthright?

7. Jacob should not have made this bad bargain, for God had promised him that very blessing. Why could he not allow God to work out his purposes in his own way. David waited. God's time, and finally received the throne promised him. Let us trust God.

8. It is a sad thing when mothers add their children to sin instead of keeping them from it.

9. There is a too late, when men cannot, or will not, chance, and the chance of reaching heaven is forever beyond them.

10. Jesus Christ, our elder brother, has bestowed upon every one all the blessings and blessings of our spiritual birthright. No one can take our blessing, but we can forfeit all its riches of grace. It is our privilege to possess and enjoy the fullness of the Gospel of Christ.

REV. T. ALBERT MOORE.

OCTOBER 27.—"BIBLE READING."

2 Tim. 3: 1-7.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., Oct. 21. Divine truth, Luke 1: 1-4, Acts 18: 24-28
Tues., Oct. 22. God's messengers, John 5: 29
Wed., Oct. 23. The Spirit the teacher, 30, 30, 31; Heb. 1: 1, 2
Thurs., Oct. 24. Our constant need, 1 Cor. 2: 14-16
Fri., Oct. 25. Our joy in the Word, John 16: 7-15
Sat., Oct. 26. The key to knowledge, 19, 19, 19, 19
Sun., Oct. 27. Daily food, Jer. 8: 8, 9; Rom. 3: 1, 2
Mon., Oct. 28. Daily food, Acts 17: 1-11

"I will make it a rule of my life to read the Bible every day."—Pledge.

"How precious is the book divine,
By inspiration given;

Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,
To guide our souls to heaven."

Voltaire predicted that at the close of the nineteenth century, the Bible would be forgotten, but instead 500,000,000 Bibles or parts thereof were distributed during that time. A fact magnificent and gratifying, indicating marvellous growth of Christian sentiment and Bible knowledge.

ENGLAND'S GREATNESS.

In the Treasure Chamber of Windsor Castle there is deposited two exquisite crystal caskets. On a memorable occasion the late Queen Victoria requested that the more costly and beautiful be brought to her. She placed it in a copy of the Bible. Can we wonder at the great moral strength of the British Empire—in the vanguard of religious progress—the brightest star in the firmament of modern civilization—when the sovereign of the realm causes to be placed on record such a noble and exalted example.

THE BIBLE.

It is a remarkable and a significant fact that the Bible is the only book which Christ is ever known to have read, or to have quoted in the whole course of his public ministry. He never made any allusion whatever to the classic literature of Greece and Rome, which flourished in his day. The Word of God is an inexhaustible treasury of heavenly science, and the foundation of our glorious Christian faith and of our heavenly heritage, its moral code being the standard of our lives.

ITS HISTORICAL VALUE.

Viewed as an historical book, the Word of God is the most ancient, the most authentic, and the most instructive and interesting record ever presented to man-