

changed in the East, and as they were made of most durable, and often very valuable, materials and brilliantly colored by rare and costly dyes, they were part of the inherited wealth of a family. To preserve them from injury and from insects, they were packed in close-fitting cedar boxes, with the leaves or

bark of aromatic shrubs such as camphire, henna, aloes, cassia and myrrh, which preserved them and gave them an agreeable fragrance. The smell of the festive garments (v. 15) of the princely hunter suggested to Isaac the freshness and fertility of the land which should be his son's heritage.

THE LESSON APPLIED

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Jacob was not naturally bad. He was weak-willed and easily led. Such persons are in perpetual peril. The roaming devil may devour them in any time of temptation. These people with a weak will are the prey of others. Those who have base desires and low designs, use the easily-led to carry out wicked plans.

There is reason to believe that he wanted what his mother contrived to get for him. He was not bad enough to lay the trap which his mother laid, but he was ambitious enough to keep wishing for the blessing, until at length he was bad enough to consent to steal it when his mother showed him how this could be done.

This is the inner history of every moral fall. Great crimes have small origins. A wrong wish, a sinful fancy is indulged and pampered, against the voice of conscience, and the word of God; against reason and right it is indulged, and, as it is thus fed, it grows so large that it pushes reason and right aside.

Jacob's sin warns us against weakness of will. How many like him have been defeated because they could not say "No!" His folly may well teach us, too, that we are not to think that impossible things can possibly be ours. Wrong-doing is too large a price to pay for anything, and if this be the cost of any pleasure or advantage, it should take us no time to resolve that we cannot possibly allow ourselves to have that pleasure or advantage.

Isaac's blessing, which Jacob secured by means of deceit, carried with it all the rights of the firstborn. This is indicated in, "be lord over thy brethren," and was thought to be the great element in the blessing. To it were added material abundance and power with God, as is implied in, "cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be every one that blesseth thee."

That they were desirable blessings and of great value is beyond question. Esau's bitter grief shows how keenly he felt his loss of them. They are the objects of pursuit among men to-day—material prosperity, political power, social influence. But, as we read them, they were only temporary. They seem to have had no abiding quality of eternity in them. If they did not lead to something more, Jacob was poorly served for all his abandonment of self respect. They did lead to greater things, however. They were "the shadows of better things to come." In Isaac's blessing was contained the assurance, that from Jacob would descend the Messiah, in whom all families of the earth should be blessed. When he confirmed the blessing to Jacob, later (Gen. 28 : 1-4), Isaac calls this part of the great heritage Jacob is to have, "the blessing of Abraham." This blessing, which Jacob took away from Esau, put Jacob in the line of Christ's ancestry. This was the heart of Isaac's blessing.

This being so, it is unlikely that Esau would have been able to receive the blessing in its fulness. He was not the man to carry on the line of Abraham and Isaac. Jacob was bad enough, but Esau was worse than Jacob at his worst. Esau was a purposeless and impulsive character. This birthright had meant less to him than a meal of food, and the fertile soil and the chieftainship of his family, were more desirable in his eyes, than "the blessing of Abraham."

Esau was willing to take a "second-rate" blessing. "Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" It is not to his credit that he said this. The elder brother in the parable, who complained to his father, "thou never gavest me a kid," had the same spirit that we see in Esau. It is the whine of an inferior whose envy and sloth make him willing to take what