

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

The events recorded as occurring in the interval since last lesson are aside from the strict history of the covenant. Sarah died and the account of the purchase of the cave of Machpelah by Abraham is a fine picture of oriental courtesy and sympathy. Another equally beautiful story is that of the journey of Eliezer in search of a wife for Isaac, and the arrival of the bride. Then Abraham died at the ripe old age of 175 years and his body probably still lies beneath the *Haram* at Hebron where it was piously laid by the sorrowing Isaac and Ishmael. According to the chronology of our Bibles, a period of 67 years has elapsed.—B. C. 1872—1806.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Parties to the Sale. vs. 27, 29. II. The Transaction. vs. 29-31.

I. THE PARTIES TO THE SALE. 27. The boys grew—developing different dispositions under the 'same training, as in all families. No two persons are alike. Our different tastes and talents are given us by God that we may fit into different places in the world. He calls upon us to cultivate our virtues and correct, by self-control, our faults. Esau never could have grown into a Jacob, but he could have become a better Esau. A cunning hunter—"cunning" has here its primary meaning, "well-instructed," (i. e. "kenning," "knowing"), "expert," "skilful." It never occurs in the Bible in the sense of "artful." The R. V. omits it in Eph. 4: 14. Esau's skill as a hunter is referred to again in ch. 27: 2, 3. A man of the field—not a farmer, or husbandman, but one fond of "field sports," such as hunting and roaming about. He was restless, not industrious. No doubt Esau's disposition inclined him to this mode of life, and his uncouth appearance, rough, hairy, and red, would, if he was sensitive, make him shrink from society. His occupation is not condemned. It was an honorable one. But it had peculiar moral as well as physical dangers. It intensified the defects of his character. Instead of affording the discipline necessary to tame his impetuosity and strengthen his self-control, it developed his merely physical nature and left the moral and spiritual uncultivated. If Esau felt called to be a hunter, he needed the more to live near to God on account of this. Whilst we are not to shrink from any of life's duties because it is perilous, yet we are not wantonly to choose any work that leads into temptation, or does not develop the higher faculties of mind and heart. An ill trade will drag any man downwards; but God can keep our hearts clean and strong in any path of duty which he places us in. A plain man—Luther translated this "a pious man," it means rather "with a disposition inclined to a domestic and quiet life." (Keil) The same word is translated "perfect" in Job 1. 1, 8; 2: 3. It is not used here in a moral sense. He was a man of mild manners and regular habits, just as fond of home as Esau was of roaming in the fields. The two boys were the exact opposites of each other in every respect. Dwelling in tents—A hunter must spend many a night with no canopy over him but the sky. He lives in the open air. 28. Isaac loved Esau—We are attracted by characters that seem most opposite to our own. The gentle sensitive Isaac admired the boisterous, rollicking Esau while the energetic Rebekah is most attached to the quiet, home-loving Jacob. Such parental partiality was altogether wrong and could not but prove hurtful. Esau lost a mother's confidence and sympathy, which he needed, more than Jacob did, to subdue his roughness and inspire him with a love for God and home. Doubtless through his father's fondness he lost many a wholesome correction and was too much left to himself and his wild companions. Had the brothers grown up with the mutual affection of Joseph and Benjamin, the one would have corrected the defects of the other. God's purpose would have been carried out all the same but with happier results to both. Because he did eat of his venison—Isaac was fond of game. Doubtless he would have cared for Esau just as much had his generous disposition shown itself in some other way. The savory venison awoke his love into consciousness and expression, and so appeared to onlookers the ground of it.

II. THE TRANSACTION. 29. Sod—past tense of "seethe," to boil. Pottage—This was made of lentils, a grain resembling a flattened pea or bean, and belonging to the same class. Its botanical name is *lens*, a word which we have adopted and which signifies a lentil shaped piece of glass. Lentils are still a favorite food in the East, and are becoming highly esteemed in England. They are very nutritious, containing food in a form even more condensed than eggs, and can be produced for almost nothing, ten dollars will purchase enough to feed one person for a year. (Peloubet) 30. Feed me—the word means eating greedily, and expresses the ravenous hunger of an impatient man, stimulated by the tempting viands. That same red pottage—lit. "that red—that red stuff there." Lange suggests that he said "Feed with that Red, me the Red