

true objective point for the next attack upon unbelief or indifference—to look over the whole territory in a sort of bird's eye view instead of having our vision focalized upon our own little bailiwick.

In these gatherings, moreover, there is no spirit of unrest as regards faith. There is no discussion of vital principles from the standpoint of possible change. Youth devoted to the Lord is not apt to be skeptical. And youth carried on to age in this sort of fraternal loyalty in Christian work is as little apt to be corroded with the evolutionist or skeptical fads which beset some theologians who have lived much in the library or who have fallen into the habit of seeing how far they could go even in the pulpit and upon the lecture platform, in ingenious speculations which tend to upset faith among those who have not the time for independent thought and study and who look at these as their teachers. Therefore, we believe that such bodies as we have referred to are most powerful instruments towards keeping up the loyalty of Christian young people in that they keep up first of all the feeling of brotherhood and brotherly sympathy—the glow and fire and flame of true churchly devotion. The church cannot drift into evolutionism or rationalism as long as these practical young Christians are coming on the stage. If they thus fulfil a really conservative office, in spite of the breezy progressiveness of their methods, may they not hope to increase that effectiveness most largely by those great annual meetings which rivet the fraternal links that bind them together?

We would not underrate prayer, the reading of the Bible and self-examination. There may be deceptive enthusiasm about a crowd. There no doubt often is, as regards some of its individuals. Still without contact, without the shaking up, the rattling of dry bones into new life, the vivifying effect of fraternalism in religion we are all likely to become lifeless and formal. We must balance the two forces and strive to keep each in healthful operation. They are the proper corollaries and supplements of each other. The man of private prayer ought to be the man who loves the society of those who are animated by a common hope and trying under God's grace to work out a common spiritual destiny.—N. Y. Observer.

### Half-Hours for Mothers with the Children.

This column will be given as a help to those who try to interest their children in the Sunday school lesson. It will follow the course of lessons adopted by the Provincial Synod for general use in the Church in Canada. While taking up the key-note of the lesson it will supplement rather than anticipate the work of the teacher by treating the subject very simply and supplying further information and illustration. Those who desire the complete lesson can obtain the "Teacher's Assistant" from the office of THE CHURCH EVANGELIST for 30c. a year.

TEXT.—Rom. iii. 8, R.V. "Why not . . . Let us do evil that good may come? whose condemnation is just."

Read Gen. xxvii. 6-30.

Place, Beersheba, (Gen. xxvii. 10. Find on map.) Period, eighteenth century, B.C. Patriarchal age. Persons. Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, Jacob.

Names and meanings. Beersheba, the well of the oath, Isaac, he will laugh; Rebekah, the Enchanter (because of her beauty and charm); Esau, hairy; Jacob, a supplanter, one who trips up the heel, i.e. takes the place of another.

#### INTRODUCTION.

This history belongs to the third division of the book Genesis. Eleven chapters takes us from the creation to Abraham. In thirteen more we have the history of Abraham. Then twelve chapters about Isaac and his sons, and the last fourteen about Joseph and his brethren.

In the second and third divisions we find that God chose three people and promised that in their seed all nations of the earth should be blessed. We find three others side by side with them who neither receive the promise nor the blessing.

1. Lot, Abraham's nephew, who lived among wicked men that he might get rich. Did he get what he sinned for? Was he rich in Zoar when all that he had was burnt up in Sodom?

2. Ishmael, Isaac's half-brother; God took him into covenant, and the descendants of Ishmael, the Bedouins of the desert, are a free people to this day, worshipping the God of Abraham—but Ishmael did not have the special blessing, (Gen. xvii. 21.)

3. Esau, Jacob's brother. He loved earthly things and did not care for heavenly things; he despised his birthright, he married two women who worshipped idols, he lived as if this present life was all, and God rejected him, for you know our Saviour was descended from Jacob; look in the first chapter of St. Matthew and see if you can find Jacob's name.

We can see Esau's character in his descendants, the Edomites, "Esau is Edom," (Gen. xxxvi. 1.) See what is said about them,

(Obadiah 8-14.) The four wicked Herods in the New Testament were Edomites.

#### I. THE DECEIT PLANNED.

Now let us turn to our reading. We know from Gen. xxv. 29-34 that Esau did not care for his birthright but Jacob longed for it. Rebekah, Jacob's mother, would not trust God and leave it to Him to do His will about the birthright. Perhaps she thought "Jacob cares for it but Esau does not, and Jacob is a good, loving son to me; I will try to get the best blessing for him." But how did she try? She taught her son, who was a man at least 40 years of age, how to deceive his old, blind father and when he hesitated she said, "Obey my voice," and when an Eastern mother says that, even to a grown up son, he is expected to do as she tells him. (Read vv. 6-10.) Isaac lived more than twenty years after, but he seems to have thought that he would soon die (v. 4) perhaps he was ill. Now read v. 11-12. Does Jacob hesitate because his mother wants him to do a wicked thing, or because he is afraid he will be found out? Do you think that is the right way to feel about it? Jacob did not hate deceit but he did not want to "seem" to be a deceiver. Some children will tell a lie to get what they want and think no more about it, but if they are found out and despised for their falsehood they are very miserable. There are boys and girls who would take nice things from their mother's cupboard or even snatch fruit or candy in a shop if they were not afraid of being found out and punished. They do not like them, but have they an honest and good heart? Could they be trusted if they thought nobody would know what they did?

#### II. THE DECEIT ACTED OUT.

We are told (Gen. xxv. 27) that Jacob was "a plain man," meaning quiet, harmless, or perfect. He was "a dweller in tents;" he stayed at home in the great encampment and probably looked after all the men who kept the sheep and cattle, goats and camels. Isaac had great flocks and herds, Jacob could easily go and take a kid, for no one would question the master's son or wonder why he did it. The goodly sweet-scented raiment (v. 15-27), perhaps smelling of sandal-wood and spices, was the right of the eldest son; it was still Esau's. So we see Jacob had never claimed the birthright. Read v. 16. People who live much in the open air sometimes get hairy where their skin is bare, sailors on their chests, farmers on their arms, and Esau must have had soft fine hair on his neck and hands. The "bread" (v. 17) would be flat cakes baked upon the hot hearth-stone (see ch. xviii. 6) Read v. 19-20. Perhaps Jacob hoped to deceive without saying anything but we see that he soon had to tell a downright lie to be found out.

"O what a tangled web we weave

When first we practice to deceive."

How terrified he must have been when his blind father's hands were feeling him and how ashamed as he went on adding lie to lie (v. 24.)

#### III. A GOOD MOTIVE; AN EVIL WAY.

Now we want to see why Jacob did so mean and wicked a thing. Was it to get more riches than his brother? No; Isaac was very rich, he had plenty for both sons. Did he want to rule over Esau? No; he was not a masterful man. It was the promise of God made to Abraham that he was to rule; he must have heard of it for he was fifteen when his grandfather died. He knew some thing of the Saviour who should come, for Abraham knew. (St. John viii. 56.) Jacob longed to hear that in his seed should all nations of the earth be blessed. Was this right? Yes. Then how was Jacob in the wrong? Read our text, which is from the R.V., what does St. Paul tell us about those who say "Let us do evil that good may come?" He says "their condemnation" (i.e. the judgment they bring upon themselves) "is just"—they deserve to be punished.

A little ten-year-old girl called Mary had her wilful little three-year old brother to mind, and when she wanted to get him home she would say "Run, run, Dickie, there's a big savage dog coming;" but Dickie began to find that it was not true and to wait to see if the dog would really come. One day there really was a savage dog and Mary cried out to Dickie and tried to pull him away but he dragged back and would not come and the dog bit both the children; Mary had told lies to make Dickie obedient, but all lies must fail at last.

And Jacob did evil that good might come but his deceit did not win the blessing he lied to get. God gave it to him afterwards, but he punished him severely for his sin. Tell me how. 1. He had to go far from home for fear of his brother. 2. He never saw his mother again. 3. He had to work for Laban twenty years and was deceived by him. 4. His own sons cruelly deceived him.

Now say this after me and learn it by heart, it was written by a good man called Thomas à Kempis, "For no worldly thing, nor for the love of any man, is any evil to be done."