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THE Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 9.

MARCH 4th, 1894.

1st QUARTER.

Selling the Birthright. Gen. 25: 27-34.

GOLDEN TEXT: "The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." Luke 12: 23.

COMMIT TO MEMORY verses 31-34. **CHILDREN'S HYMNAL** 78, 33, 94, 133.

PROVE THAT—Godless people make bad bargains. Isa. 52: 3.

SHORTER CATECHISM—Quest. 91. How do the sacraments become effect-
ual means of salvation?

DAILY PORTIONS.

(The Selections of the International Bible Reading Association.)

MONDAY.	TUESDAY.	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.	SABBATH
Gen. 25: 27-34	Gen. 27: 15-29	Gen. 27: 30-40	Heb. 12: 11-17	John 2: 12-17	Mark 8: 34-38	Mark 6: 25-34

INTRODUCTORY DRILL—A BIRD'S EYE VIEW.

We take the following from the *Sunday School Helper*, the organ of the New Brunswick S. S. Association, edited by Rev. A. Lucas, Field Secretary.

"Those of our readers who are familiar with Normal Bible Lessons by Hurlbut, Hamill and others, have learned to systematize the lessons from Genesis 1 to Exodus 14 for this half year into two periods:

I. THE PERIOD OF THE HUMAN RACE.

This period extends from the Creation of Man, 4004 B. C., to the Call of Abraham, 1921 B. C.

In this period mark:—

Three Dates. { Creation of Man 4004 B. C.
The Deluge, 2348 B. C.
Call of Abraham 1921 B. C.

Three Epochs. { The Fall—Gen. 3: 6.
The Deluge—Gen. 7: 11
The Dispersion—Gen. 10: 25.

Three chief persons. { Adam—the first man.
Enoch—who walked with God.
Noah—the builder of the Ark.

II. THE PERIOD OF THE CHOSEN FAMILY.

This period begins with the Call of Abraham, 1921 B. C., and closes with the Exodus, 1491 B. C.

This is a period of Patriarchal Administration, and in studying it we may mark approximately:—

Three Dates. { The Call of Abraham 1921 B. C.
The Sojourn in Egypt 1706 B. C.
The Exodus from Egypt 1491 B. C.

Three Epochs. { The journeys of the Patriarchs.
The Sojourn in Egypt.
The Oppression of the Israelites.

Three chief persons. { Abraham—the friend of God—Jas 2: 23.
Jacob—the prince of God—Gen. 32: 28.
Joseph—the preserver of his people—Gen. 44: 5.

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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

One," but a hungry Esau is not likely to be in a humour for making puns. He is so little versed in the culinary art that he does not at the moment remember the name. Perhaps Jacob, like his father, was somewhat of an epicure, and had made a broth of Egyptian beans, which he had procured as a dainty. Both odor and color were new and highly attractive to one faint with hunger. (James 1:12) The color was probably a chocolate brown. **Called Edom**—i.e. "Red." It is probable that Esau received the surname Edom from his complexion. But that does not forbid its receiving a double emphasis from the present occasion. Lentil soup is an insignificant thing in itself, but this particular bowl of it was "big with the destinies of nations." Jacob's name had a double justification after its first bestowal (ch. 27:36). The descendants of Esau were called Edomites and dwelt in Mt. Seir. **31. Sell me this day**—B. V. margin "first of all." Jacob must have been watching for this chance, and brooding over the prophecy regarding his future (see verse 23). He had not faith enough to let God give him the blessing in his own time and way, but he must needs fend for himself and meanly wring from his brother's distress and moral weakness what he had the sure promise of God for. When you imitate him we reap the same result. We may get the desired good but we get a curse with it. Bitter ingredients are introduced into a cup which, by "trusting God and doing rightly," would have been unmixed sweetness. Patiently bide his will. Promotion will come when we are ripe for it, if it is to come at all, and if it never comes be assured we would have courted only failure and sorrow by aiming at what was not meant for us. **Birthright**—This was three-fold, (1) the right of rule in the family and tribe, (2) the right to a double portion of the inheritance; (Gen. 48: 22; Deut. 21: 17); (3) the right of priesthood in the family. (Ex. 13: 12, 13; 22: 29; Num. 8: 17, 18). In the family of Isaac there were additional honors and privileges, (1) the possession of Canaan, (2) Covenant relations with God; (3) and the progenitorship of the Messiah. Dr. Thompson, in *The Land and the Book*, (vol. on Southern Palestine, p. 254), suggests some plausible reasons by which Jacob may have sought to quiet his conscience. These are answered by Canon Rawlinson in *Isaac and Jacob: Their Lives and Times*, (p. 80). "He did not see the justice of the law of primogeniture." Yet he was anxious to transfer its privileges to himself. "They were twins, and the difference in their ages was not worth speaking of." But any difference at all was sufficient to establish the rights of the elder. "Jacob valued the blessing and Esau despised it." Valuing what another has, gives us no right to it. "Jacob had augmented the estate and Esau had squandered it." A careful steward does not, by his fidelity establish a claim to heirship. "He was carrying out God's purpose." God does not need the help of man's crooked dealing. The end cannot justify the means. Jacob does not stand alone in his meanness. **32. At the point to die**—means either, speaking with exaggeration, "I am dying of hunger," or "My life is so full of danger that I may be killed any day," or "I shall die, and the blessings of the birthright are for others." The first view seems most natural. Esau preferred present gain, present indulgence, present gratification, to future happiness and spiritual blessings. For this he is called a "profane person" Heb. 12: 16. "What an exhibition of human nature! Esau has company in his fall. We are all stricken by his shame. We are conscious that if God had made provision for the flesh we would have listened to him more readily. 'But what will this birthright profit us? We don't see the good it does. Were it something to keep us from disease, to give us long unsated days of pleasure, to bring us the fruits of labor without the weariness of it, to make money for us, where is the man who would not value it—where is the man who would lightly give it up? But because it is only the favor of God that is offered, His endless love, His holiness made ours, this we will imperil or resign for every idle desire, for every lust that bids us serve it a little longer. We let our souls starve, if only our bodies be well tended and cared for." (Dods) **33. Swear to me this day**—B. V. "first of all"—Jacob shows his shrewdness as a business man. He knew Esau too well not to fear he would repent and try to get back the birthright, so he demands that the contract be ratified by an oath. (Gal. 3: 15). "There never was any food, except the forbidden fruit, so dear-bought as this broth of Jacob's." (Bishop Hall). If Esau was "profane," Jacob was miserably crafty and despicably mean." (Hurlbut) **34. Rose up and went his way**—as if nothing had happened. A sad picture of the carnal mind, satisfied with the gratifications of sense and oblivious to the enduring realities which concern the soul. Esau repented afterwards (Heb. 12: 17) but "what is done can't be undone." To give away some things is to lose them forever. Esau made the mistake of a great many. He thought that religion was of no value for the present life.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

The importance of this apparently trivial incident, and by no means creditable transaction, lies in the relation it has to the transfer from Esau to Jacob of the right to represent the covenant line. Esau never attempted to revoke the sale, but resigned himself to his destiny. The passage is full of practical instruction. Our teaching will group itself around two points—(1) The contrasted characters of the two brothers and (2) The manner in which we may imitate Esau's folly. The buyer was Jacob, a typical Jew. Timid, shrewd and weak of faith, yet of a deeply religious nature. He valued the covenant and its blessings. His trials wrought in him "the peaceful fruit of righteousness." From Jacob, "the supplanter," he rose to be Israel, "the Prince of God." Find out where your weakness lies. In some it is a habit of exaggeration, in others selfishness, bad temper, speaking saucily, laziness, dislike of certain duties, &c. Set yourself to overcome it whatever it is, and ask God to help you. The seller was Esau, reckless, self-indulgent, valuing only present comforts, and careless in regard to spiritual things. He might have been a worthy successor of the heroic Abraham had he not yielded to the control of his animal impulses. As it was he never became anything other than Edom, "the Red one." The man who bartered priceless privileges for a moment's gratification. Beware of imitating his folly. God has given you a birthright also. A birthright of character, of health, of privileges, of citizenship, of religion. Many are still willing to sell these things for a bowl of pottage. Impress upon your scholars the privilege conferred upon them in baptism. They have the same birthright as Esau sold. If they will not assume the duties and cherish the affections of God's children they are selling the birthright for whatever keeps them from becoming true Christians. (Note that I and J are the same letters).

THE BUYER.

Jacob.
Israel.

THE SELLER.

Esau.
Edom.

THE BARGAIN.

Birthright.
Bowl of pottage.

NORMAL DRILL

based on the text-book, "The Sabbath School Teacher's Handbook; or, The Principles and Practice of teaching, with special reference to the Sabbath School," prepared by Principal Kirkland of the Toronto Normal School.

THE ART OF TEACHING. (CHAPTER VI).

Science has for its object investigation of principles. It consists of general truths to be known.

Art has for its object the accomplishment of a given result by the best means. It consists largely in practical rules to be remembered.

The Art of Teaching consists in the judicious application of the Principles of Teaching. It is usually spoken of as a Method of Teaching.

Def. of Method. Method in general is the order which we voluntarily introduce into our thoughts, our acts, and our undertakings. Methods are to teachers themselves what teachers are to pupils.

Methods of Teaching must conform to the three following Principles:

- (1) To the special characteristics of the knowledge we are communicating.
- (2) To the laws of mental growth at different periods of life.
- (3) To the particular purpose of the instruction.