

trained, then the children would be kept in the Church.

The whole question is one which is much too large to be adequately discussed in a brief paper. What I have said is only suggestive, and I trust that the subject will receive from the Synod the consideration which its importance demands.

The Discipline of Jacob

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Peculiar interest attaches to the story of Jacob's life. He would be a great man anywhere, so supple and so strong is he—the two qualities which count for everything in the wrestling of which life is so full. But the interest lies in this, that he was to begin with, and continued for long to be, a man of the world, one whose eye was always on

THE MAIN CHANCE,

and who believed in success. The qualities which made him a prince with God came very near to making him nothing more than a prince among men, had it not been that God laid His strong hand upon those qualities and claimed them for His own.

There are three chapters in his life: (1) The story of his doings in the promised land, till his sin compels him to leave it. (2) The story of his fortunes among his kinsfolk in Mesopotamia. (3) The story of his sojourn in the promised land, after his return. Here the story merges gently into the story of Joseph.

The first glimpse that we get of him does not raise our hopes very high that he will worthily continue the divine work begun in Abraham. The child so long waited for begins his career by taking a mean advantage of his brother (25: 21-34). Yet even here, despite the meanness, are traits which are great, and only need to be touched to nobleness, as they will one day be, by the spirit of religion. For this scene reveals his characteristic resource, his power to take in a situation at a glance, and his grasp of

THE FUTURE AND THE UNSEEN.

He is not governed like his brother by pres-

ent moods and passions. He will be the sport of no man or whim; he is born to control.

Precisely those qualities mark him in the very next scene, which brings him before us as winning the blessing from his brother by fraud (ch. 27). There is the same unscrupulousness, the same fertility of resource, the same power to adapt himself to the needs of the situation in which he finds himself. He has all the suppleness of the true wrestler. He is a man worth winning. All that is wrong with him is his intense self-reliance. He will need to be sharply taught that a man may bring himself into situations to which he cannot adapt himself, and in which his skill and resource count for nothing. He will need to learn that deeds have consequences, and that

SIN MEANS SORROW.

That, then, is what God means to teach him by the next discipline He sends upon him. The wrong done his brother compels him to leave his mother and his home. His banishment is the first blow with which God hammers his life into shape.

How deep a life it is, and how big with religious possibility, is seen in the beautiful story of his dream at Bethel just before leaving his native land. (28: 10-22.) In the loneliness of the night, his deeper and better heart gets a chance.

ANGELS MOVE ABOUT HIM.

He knows heaven to be not very far from earth; and his heart fills with the divine assurance that though he can take nothing else with him into his new life, God will be with him, and keep him, and bring him back.

The second chapter of his life has opened. He is now in Mesopotamia, reaping the reward of his sin against his brother, and learning by

FURTHER STERN DISCIPLINE

that he is not to have it all his own way in life. He begins his new life by service, a service which calls out his old vigilance and tests his old self-reliance. The service is sweetened by love; but even in this, the ro-