

them. Just as the true parent hovers over the pillow of the sick child, leaving the well ones for it, so God has a special concern for the sinner, and He tracks him with a tender love and a willingness to forgive. "God sees the possible diamond in the most unpromising dirt," and the sinner's need is His opportunity to help.

3. Jacob's resolve follows upon God's revelation. When he found that God was near him, sinner though he was, his heart overflowed with gratitude and love, and he made his great resolve. Jacob's bargaining spirit here has been much criticised. "If"—well, it has a touch of traffic about it, but until we have tried it, and got beyond it, our criticisms had better be smothered. His resolve contains three things that we might promise. First, God was to be his personal God. Will you choose your fathers' God as your God? Perhaps you can enrich the idea of Him, but will you "choose" Him? Second, Jacob promised to establish a place of worship. The contribution of your

presence, your sympathy, your support to a house of God, may mean not only your own and your friends' welfare, but the world's also. Third, he promised that he would give a portion of his income to benevolent work. Was it not enough? Well, we need not follow him in that particular. When we think of how much has been done for us through Jesus Christ, we are led to surpass Jacob's allotment to the cause of God.

4. Some further lessons may be drawn from the ladder thronged with angels. A ladder is for climbing. To get to the top demands effort. No true, earnest Christian life is possible without effort. Slackness will not succeed. There must be no "unlit lamp" or "ungirt loin." Nor are we left without help in the Christian life. God's angels, in many forms, minister to us. And no life can be truly successful, however much wealth or pleasure or power it may bring, from which God is absent and which does not, at last, reach the blessedness of the heavenly home.

### THE LESSON GRADED

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

#### For Teachers of Bible Classes

The Lesson shows how God began His discipline of Jacob. Let the class discussion deal with these points:

1. *The circumstances under which Jacob left his father's home*, vs. 10, 11. Talk over the situation: he had sinned, his mother sinned for him, he had deceived his father, cheated his brother, lost his peace of mind, his father's trust, his brother's love, his mother's presence. He was a fugitive driven out by the anger of the one whom he had injured. He was now utterly lonely, a homeless wanderer, with no shelter but the overarching sky and no pillow but a stone, deprived meanwhile of all the advantages which he had schemed and lied to obtain. Bring out the truth that though Jacob was God's chosen vessel, he was poor enough material for a saint, until God transformed him by discipline and vision.

2. *The heaven-reaching ladder*, vs. 12-15. Emphasize the main idea, that God drew near to Jacob and gave him an invitation to

return from sin to righteousness. Now draw from the Lesson: (a) Jacob's personal conviction of the reality of God. Fugitive from man, he cannot escape from God. God was there, heaven was there and he was not alone. (b) The supremacy of God's plan in human history, as shown in a reaffirmation of the promise made to Abraham and Isaac, and the assurance of personal guidance. Get the class to see what a remarkable promise this was to a guilty fugitive. Turn now to the practical lessons: *First*, that from every life a ladder reaches to God. The angels appeared to Jacob, but Jesus is our medium of communication with heaven. *Secondly*, the ladder represents personal, laborious, patient effort. Jacob was beginning the ascent, and years of patient climbing were before him. It is the same for all. *Third*, that God comes to the sinner to make him a saint. His great work is salvation, not judgment.

3. *The effect of the vision of God*, vs. 16-22. Make clear the following facts in Jacob's experience: (a) A new consciousness of the presence of God, carrying with it a sense of awe and the nearness of heaven; (b) a new