

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

Our God "waits to be gracious" (Isa. 30: 18). v. 1.

When one is even blunderingly in the way of duty, God's angels are not far distant. v. 1.

Jacob made many a blunder, but this time he is on the right track. vs. 9-12.

Jacob is alone, but God will not leave him alone. v. 24.

God often seems like an antagonist who wishes to destroy, when in reality He is the friend who longs to bless. v. 24.

If God makes us feel our weakness, it is that we may know His strength. v. 25.

"Men ought always to pray and not to faint (Luke 18: 1). v. 26.

He who prevails with God is indeed a prince. v. 28.

God is never so far off as even to be near:—

He is within! Our spirit is the home He holds most dear.

To think of Him as by our side is almost as untrue,

As to remove His throne beyond those skies of starry blue.

So all the while I thought myself homeless, forlorn and weary,

Missing my joy, I walked the earth—myself God's sanctuary.—Faber.

The first attempt of Jacob is to frighten Esau into forgiveness. The second attempt of Jacob is to caress Esau into forgiveness. The third, and successful attempt, is to humble himself.

Ask yourself that question, "What is my real name—the name God knows me by? Is it Simon the braggart, or Peter the Rock? Is it Willing, or Disobedient? Bold, or Coward? Faithless, or Believer?"—Peloubet.

As Abraham had to become God's heir in the simplicity of humble dependence on God; as Isaac had to lay himself on God's altar with absolute resignation, and so become the heir of God, so Jacob enters on the inheritance through the most thorough humbling.—Professor Marcus Dods.

The limits of space have prevented any study of Esau, except as he appears in connection with his younger brother Jacob's story. In many respects his was the finer character, his reception of Jacob in ch. 33 being especially beautiful. The moral of the lives of the two brothers is well given by Geikie. "In the elder we see how the finest disposition, if unsupported by steady habits and fixed religious principles, is no safeguard against moral degeneracy and utter failure in all the nobler purposes of existence. In the younger, the refining and dignifying influence of solid worth, even when it has to struggle against the weakness and temptation of a meaner nature, is shown no less clearly. The one shines before us in his youth, only to darken and lose his glory ere he dies; the other rises amidst clouds and mists, but breaks through them after a time, till, at his setting, the very clouds that darkened round him at first, heighten his glory as he disappears."

Light from the East

A PRESENT FOR ESAU—Jacob wisely adopted the plan of a series of offerings, so that the cumulative effect of them might have time to work on Esau's mind. Gifts are still expected at every turn in the unchanging East. Any traveller who desires an audience with some petty chief must make room for himself by sending a present before him. If the giver has good cause to fear resentment, the gift must be in proportion to the magnitude of the offence, and such is an Oriental's cupidity, that, if it be valuable enough, it will blind his eyes to almost any transgression and open the way to a reconciliation. When a case is laid before a judge, a gift usually prefaces the application for a decision. Every servant and temporary assistant, when he receives his stipulated pay, must have a present in addition, to mark his employer's satisfaction with his services. Every woman and child by the highway when a stranger passes clamors for a gift, and even the babe who cannot utter a word opens and shuts his tiny fist to show his need.