

come down upon us and to stand over us, and to set Himself against us, and to seem to be the worst enemy we have—an enemy who springs upon us in the darkness, and makes our face to grow white with fear. If He puts out all His strength He could hurl us shrieking into the outer darkness from where we sit. But it is not meant for that. It is meant at last to bring us to understand Him, and to cling to Him, and to give up all duplicity, and all deceit, and all dissimulation, and all double-mindedness, both before God and men, all playing fast and loose with our own conscience, and with what we know to be right—to bring all that to an end and with the arms of our faith round about Him, just to cling, and cling, and cling. Then we win. Then we have won against ourselves. Then also have we won with God. Jacob ceased to strive, and was broken with tears. Think of Jacob crying. Think of some before me to-day crying before God. My brother, when did you ever shed the tear before God? When did you ever shed the tear before God alone, simply because you are the wretched bundle of contradictions that you are?

When have we done it? When have we given to God these gracious drops and these gracious evidences that the fountains of the great deep at last are being broken up within us, that the old self is dying, and the new man is rising in his God-given power and beauty? Jacob weeping; Jacob clinging; Jacob pleading—he who before had been used to get at things in a far different fashion. Aye, that has to come too, and with some of us the very time of life to which we have come makes it an awful problem, whether it is ever to arrive. Aye, it has got to be soon, or it will never be with some of us. You will not for ever go on in this condition. You are not so well balanced as you congratulate yourself that you are. You are far more biased in one way than the world and the devil and your own deceitful heart are allowing you to think. When is the end to come? The true secret of spiritual success lies in the name that was given him in place of the old one: Israel in place of Jacob. The true secret of all want of success in the building up of character, and in the building up of a truly prosperous life lies in the name "Jacob," and in the foul, ugly composite behind the name. And, contrariwise, the secret of all freshness, beauty, virility, and power in Christian character and life lies in this new name, Israel—strong with God and strong with men.

And this honour have all God's Israel. This is the stamp upon us. This is the *sine qua non*. If we have not got this, then no wonder that the world looks upon us and

scarcely knows what to call us—whether hypocrite or true man. Jacob is not perfect yet. On this side of eternity we shall never be perfect. There is a limp in him where there never was a limp before. The sons of Jacob never saw him limp. Jacob with a limp—that is a new thing in the world. That strong, supple, lithe man, Jacob, limping! Oh, my brother, may it be seen to day and from to day and forward. I would like to meet you down the town with your head a little lower than usual. It would be a good sign—Jacob, with a bowed head, and with a softened look in his eye. That would look heavenly, believe me. It has not been there. That holy light has not been the light of your countenance in past years. It has been a mingled light, a strange, shifting light, about which one can never tell whether it is going to brighten or going to fade away into the dulness of utter wordliness, and selfishness, and unspirituality. May God grant that from to-day and forward the victory may come. May we go out of these doors with the false strength utterly beaten, with our eyes open, and with the chastened look upon our faces of men and women who have gone through something, and who have been severely handled. Less than that would not have been kind to us. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." That is Peniel set to music: "Lead me in the way everlasting."

We are sitting here and we are troubling ourselves about meeting somebody to-morrow, and about how we shall be able to meet to-morrow, and how we shall be able to cut and contrive against the morrow. Before to-morrow has come to day has come, and God with it, and we have to meet Him. Let us meet God, and let us get our hearts and our lives straightened and put right. Then we shall be able to meet all the morrows that are coming. God is with us, and this great honour may come to us to-day. We might go out of that door princes with God, having power with Him and with our fellow-men. Oh, that we might break out to-day into the true dignity, and power, and privilege of spiritual manhood. You remember Wesley's hymn. It sums up—sums up all the application of it. He says:

"Come, O Thou Traveller unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see;
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee:
With Thee all night I mean to stay
And wrestle till the break of day.