

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

JACOB'S LADDER.

As the "Highway" of the Thirty-fifth Chapter of Isaiah.

(By Anna Ross, Toronto.)

Abraham had the covenant with God, and he rested on it. Jacob had the same covenant with God, but he learned to wrestle on it and prevail. The faith on God that wrestles for others and prevails, is beyond the faith that merely personally rests. What the world pre-eminently needs now is intercessors who know how to wrestle on the covenant as Jacob did. "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make, Jerusalem a praise in the earth." These prevail with God and their "return to Zion with song and everlasting joy upon their heads."

Abraham did not understand this interesting wrestling. He tried it for Sodom, but the covenant did not enter into that prayer. He pleaded neither the blood of a sacrifice for those sinners, nor the promises of God. He pleaded only the supposed righteousness of ten men in the city, and the justice of God; and neither of these arguments could have any priestly power for the men of Sodom. There are many men and women who have the resting faith like Abraham, who yet do not understand how to prevail for others like Jacob. Is it not worth while to get any light possible from the story of this "prince" in intercessory prayer?

God prepared him for this work by giving him a special picture lesson on the subject. While he was lying on his stone pillows, his heart still beating quick with solemn joy at the new possession of his covenant heritage, he slept but his heart was awake, and he saw a ladder with its foot resting on the ground beside him, and its top reaching up to heaven. Messengers of God were going up on the ladder, and then coming down again. (notice, first ascending and then descending), and "the Lord stood above it." He was not sitting, as He is usually represented; but as Stephens saw Him later, "standing at the right hand of God." He stood, ready to receive those ascending messengers and to send them down again with "songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."

Then the Lord spoke, and renewed the covenant with Jacob direct, adding promises of personal tender care and blessing, closing with these strong words, "It will not leave thee until I have done what which I have spoken to thee of. Was not the Lord, by these very words, teaching Jacob to hold Him to all that which He had spoken to him of? Thus God's covenant to the full extent of its spoken promises and implied privileges, was pointed out to him, while that ladder was still before his eyes, as his highway of holy and prevailing traffic with God. Whatever God had promised he could win by prayer.

Jacob's subsequent life shows that he understood this A. B. C. lesson on prevailing prayer, and that he practiced it till he early attained an uncommon proficiency. He matriculated with high honors into God's great experimental College of prayer that morning at Peniel when he received his new name, and the limitless "blessing" he had set his heart on, and the Master's hand-written comment on his work—"for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed." He graduated from the College one afternoon in Egypt,

when he passed the covenant blessing to each of his twelve sons, now, in answer to his prevailing prayers, every one of them, men of humility, men of filial and brotherly love, men fitted in God's sight to be the founders of the twelve tribes of His sacred people, and to have their names kept in everlasting remembrance, written in the gates of the New Jerusalem itself. His whole twelve sons prayed into the kingdom—that was a graduation with a hundred per cent. Now he was surely more than a "prince" was he not even a "king and a priest" in this interesting work?

This ladder is ours to Christ as well as his. But are we understanding it as he did, and using it? If not, we may fall even to matriculate into the great prayer College.

That we may win his success, let us study his method. That is given with great simplicity in Gen. 32, 9-12—only four verses.

Jacob is fearing the wrath of his brother. After taking one precautionary measure, he turns to his ladder of prevailing traffic with God, and we can just watch his climbing up.

He first takes hold of the Lord's own chosen covenant name,—"O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac." We can use the same, for Abraham is the father of all them that believe.

Then he plants his foot upon a promise—"Thou hast said, 'Return unto thy hundred, and I will deal well with thee.'" "Thou hast said," that is an ever-recurring rung in this ladder.

"I am not worthy." O but that is an important rung to plant your feet upon. It seems a step down, but it really is a step closer to heaven every time. See it in the prayer of Nehemiah, in his first chapter; that is a "ladder prayer." Also Daniel's in his ninth chapter; and the 130 Psalm; these are all "ladder" prayers. "Not worthy of the mercies, and the truth," "Mercy" that gave the promise, and "truth" that fulfils it. These are the two sides of the ladder. Each precious promise in it springs out of God's mercy, and rests upon God's truth. Jacob lays a hand upon each, and mounts on.

"With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two hands." Thanksgiving for blessings already received and promises already fulfilled—that is the next blessed rung. "Deliver me, I pray thee." Clear cut petition, that is the next. He tells the Lord in very few words just what he wants. "I fear him, lest he come, and smite the mother with the children." The outpouring of his fears, the nestling with his fears into the heart of God,—that is the next. Ps. 62.8.

"Thou hast said" that comes again, and then the covenant promise. O the power of that double plea!—power to awaken glad confidence in the intercessor—that is the power needed. There is no need for power to move the heart of God. He cannot let out His blessings upon sinners without a channel, and it is only believing prayer that can constitute a channel. Lord, teach us to pray, as thou didst teach Jacob.

Lord Kilmaine, who was 63 the other day, is both an Irish peer and a Scottish baronet, descending from Sir John Browne, who was created a baronet of Nova Scotia by Charles I in 1636. He owns 15,000 acres, more or less, in Westmeath and Mayo, and has been a Representative Peer for Ireland since 1890.

The recent forest fires in Australia were the most destructive on record there.

DEATH OF DR. HUTCHINSON.

The Montreal Witness furnishes the following particulars about Rev. Patrick Hynds Hutchinson, M.A., D.D., whose death from an attack of pneumonia took place at the manse Huntingdon, on the 8th instant: The Rev. Dr. Hutchinson was born in Belfast, Ireland, and was educated at the Belfast Academy, and afterwards at the University of Glasgow. He was a distinguished student of the university both in arts and theology, but especially in the classical department, and winning one of the most valuable prizes open to competition, the Ewing Fellowship. As Ewing Fellowship he acted for four years as assistant to Prof. Ramsay, after which he was for eight years assistant minister at Cambuslang. On coming to Canada he was called to Huntingdon, where for eleven years he has since labored with great acceptance, winning the love and esteem of his congregation. The new church opened there last January, has been pronounced by all who have seen it, to be one of the handsomest in Canada, and the success of his ministry is attested by the erection of such a magnificent edifice, and will remain as a life monument of his work for the church. Only last week, at the annual convocation of the Montreal Presbyterian College, the degree of doctor of divinity (Honora Causa) was conferred upon him, and was marked with these emphatic words: 'In offering the highest degree to one of his stainless character, intellectual attainments and pulpit ability, the college is conferring an honor upon itself. He leaves a widow and five children to mourn the loss of a kind and loving father. The deceased was 53 years of age.'

The funeral of the late Rev. P. H. Hutchinson, M.A., D.D., took place on Wednesday 11th inst., and was very largely attended. The service in St. Andrew's church was led by the Rev. J. D. Anderson, moderator of the Montreal Presbytery. The clergy present at the funeral were the Revs. Professor McKenzie, Doctor Robert Campbell and M. S. Oxley, and Mr. Russell, all of Montreal, and the Revs. Dr. Morrison, Duclou, Whillan, Stewart, Kellock, and Corbett. C. E. Jenkins, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, and the Rev. R. C. Peever pastor of the Methodist Church. The service opened with prayer and hymn 226, 'Now the Laborer's Task is O'er.' The Rev. Mr. Peever read II. Cor. v., and the Rev. Mr. Jenkins offered prayer. The choir sang 'Crossing the Bar,' and the Rev. Mr. Whillan read a portion of Scripture. The hymn, 'Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me' was sung, and touching eulogies were delivered by the Rev. Dr. Campbell and the Rev. Dr. Morrison. The hymn, 'Peace, Perfect Peace,' and 'Jesus Saviour, Pilot Me,' and the pronouncing of the benediction by the Rev. Mr. Anderson closed the services in the church. The coffin was then lifted by the members of the session, who acted as pall-bearers, and taken to the Huntingdon Protestant Cemetery. The long procession to the cemetery was headed by members of the Montreal Presbytery, followed by the session of St. Andrew's Church, the managers and trustees, the chief mourners the Bible class, the Sunday school, and the members of the congregation. The committal service at the grave was said by the Rev. Mr. Anderson. The floral tributes were most beautiful.

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