

2. He was prospered greatly. "This man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid servants, and men servants, and camels and asses." He valued that kind of success, and he was the man to win it.

3. His riches were his sorrow. It had been sore toil trial to get them. It was sorer toil to keep them. Read chapter after chapter of his history and see what cares and distresses gathered around this successful schemer—what enmities, what domestic miseries and strifes. Many families have been happy enough and peaceful enough till some accursed gold, won by ignoble arts, came to them, and then farewell to happiness, peace and concord. Read carefully the history of this successful schemer and see how every chapter of it is filled with a retribution, how his successes were his curses. Possession was to him a fountain of bitterness.

4. Jacob's own estimate of his career is expressed by his answer to Pharaoh when as an old man he stood in the royal presence: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." This is Jacob's epitaph on his splendid success. This weary and old man, after a life of struggle and sorrow, nine-tenths of which can be traced to his own arts, can only speak of a brief and sorrowful pilgrimage.

5. But there is another side to the life of Jacob, a nobler side. With all his faults and vices, he had that within him which was not of the world, which entered into that within the veil and could not rest in mere material good. His faith was a power in his life.

Jacob could wrestle in prayer. After the all-night wrestle with the angel all the bad and selfish qualities which are conspicuous in his early history in a measure drop from him. That night Jacob the supplanter disappears, and Israel the prince of God stands up in his place. And this is the radical strength of every man who would leave his baser nature behind him and pass up to claim his birthright in the eternal world.

JACOB'S VOW.

1. "Then shall the Lord be my God." This is the beginning of all true religion—that we accept Jehovah as our God. Having the Lord for our God we have everything secured to us. For He Himself is the sum of all good, and the source of all good.

2. "And this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house." If we wish to prosper in the religious life it is essential that we fix upon some especial place of worship; consecrate it, and consecrate yourself to it. Attach yourself to it in holy purpose and resolve, and resort to it from time to time.

3. "And of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." God had prospered Jacob in his earthly career and it was nothing more than simple honesty for him to recognize God's claims upon him. The Jews did everything of this kind by tithing. It would seem that Abraham, without any sort of direction from God to do so, instinctively determined upon a tenth of the spoils which he had taken from the four kings to give to the Priest of the most high God.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS.

People are sometimes surprised to find out that what they have been struggling with in the darkness is really an angel of blessing.

While our wrestling with trouble may be triumphant we must expect that it will leave its mark upon us. We must carry through life the mark of the combat.

Jacob's ungenerous manner of obtaining the birthright from Esau set him wrong with his brother, but more it set him wrong with his God. He had a real antagonist in God.

Jacob learned God's friendship by becoming friendless, and His power by becoming weak.

In many a life as in Jacob's the climax of life, the angel climaxes are the times of deepest distress.

The thigh of Jacob's body had to be put out of joint in order that the thigh of his mind might be straightened.

A FEW ILLUSTRATIONS.

While Jacob was trusting himself, we have night scenes; when he began to trust God, "the sun rose upon him."

When Jacob, the "tripper-up," became Israel, the "prince," he exchanged heels for head!

Crafty men, like Jacob, set so many traps that they fall into one of them themselves.

God's promises are like wings, and whoever wears them does not ever know that the road is rough.

QUOTATIONS.

Jacob earnestly desired a blessing and God graciously granted him his request. Practically it may be resolved into this—a change of nature, an elevation of character. He drew him violently out of his old self, made him a better, truer, and more sincere man. What is the chief blessing He can bestow on us? Riches? No Genius? No. Health? No. What then? An elevation of character, a refinement of moral feeling, an addition of spiritual strength. The greatest blessing the Lord can give you is to draw you completely out of your old self, to give you a moral lift, to make you better, kinder and holier.—Rev. J. C. Jones.

What a comfort it is to find that the bible saints who now shine as stars in the firmament of heaven were men of not always saints; they sinned and murmured and rebelled—as we do. Heaven's rarest blades were not wrought of finer metal than that which is within our constitution. God's choicest vessels were not turned from superior earth to that of which we are made. The jewels which now lie at the foundation of the new Jerusalem were once obscure, unnamed men of no finer texture than ourselves. Let us take heart. If God could make a Prince of Israel out of such a man as Jacob surely he can do as much for us.—Rev. F. B. Meyer.

The house of God is "any place where God lets down the ladder." And how are you to determine where it may be, but by being ready for it always?—Ruskin.

Men may rise on stepping-stones Of their dead selves to higher things.—Tennyson.

In Jacob, "patience has her perfect work." At each stage of his existence he rises to a higher level.—Rawlinson.

QUESTION SPURS.

Am I trusting in my own wits, or in God's wisdom?

Is my life one of getting, or of giving?

Have I eyes for the angels?

Do not say "you" to your class of boys, but "we." They will resent being put in a separate class from the teacher, as if they were a different order of beings but will usually respond readily to any proposition in which the teacher includes himself.

At the Dew-point

Isaiah 14, 5.

When tempted by the foes of faith to falter, and in a road of doubt and despair Because thou can'st not understand the purposes of God; When burning doubt and dry despair strive hard to have control, Be still, and let the dews of Heaven descend upon thy soul.

Each morn the grass, revived by dew, spreads verdure o'er the ground, And flowers refreshed from this same source diffuse sweet fragrance round. All day beneath the burning sun, until night's sable pall Descends, they droop, and patiently wait the evening dew-drops fall.

Then let us from Dame Nature learn this lesson wise and good, We cannot while we chafe and fret perform the work we should; The task God hath appointed us,—to be our level best,— Enduring all things hopefully, leaving to Him the rest.

In "quietness and confidence" our daily strength shall be, No matter how the winds may drive o'er this life's fitful sea; So then when worried in the fight against the world's hard frown We'll wait in silence till the dews of Heaven fall softly down.—Mrs. J. M. Benton, Asst. Sup. Durham Junior Epworth League.

Two Enemies

Christian Endeavor has two enemies from which it must pray to be delivered. One is the world, who doubtless believe at all in our methods and will have none of them; and the other, the man who believes in them so absolutely that he will neither try new methods himself, nor permit any one else to, if he can help it.

Right here is where "gumption" is needed. It would lead the first man to see that a movement that in twenty-five years had girdled the globe with more than 68,000 societies, numbering millions of young people, with the motto, "For Christ and the church," and a pledge of testimony and service that has transformed the young people's work in the church from almost a cipher into one of the most vital and aggressive departments of the church-work, could not be disposed of with a sneer.

It would also reveal to the other man the fact that Christian Endeavor is more than a method or a form of work; that it uses such things, but is not used by them; that it is master, not slave; that the life is more than the expression; that the form of expression varies according to circumstances; that "practical success" is the test of a movement's efficiency.—William Shaw, in Christian Endeavor World.

The Grizzly Cause

Champ Clark, of Missouri, was addressing the House of Representatives on one occasion when a rash member interrupted him with some frivolous comment.

Mr. Clark fairly shrieked up the man who had "batted in," winding up his scorchification in this way:

"Mr. Chairman, there was once a tenderfoot who struck the grizzly region looking for bear. He was all gotten up in the finest hunting garb and his weapons were the newest that could be obtained. He had come to show the West how to kill grizzlies. He went forth one morning and never came back; and over his remains they raised a stone which bore this epitaph: 'He whistled for the grizzly, and the grizzly came.'"