

2), nor the far away night at Bethel, ch. 28. His Master and ours, long after, used to seek solitude that He might commune with the Father in heaven, Matt. 14: 23; Luke 9: 18; John 6: 15; Matt. 26: 39. *And there wrestled a man with him.*

"And there in that place of darkness,
When the murk of the night grew dim,
Under the wide roof-tree of the world
An unknown stood with him."

W. Wilfrid Campbell.

He may have possibly at first thought him to be an emissary of Esau sent to kill him. It was in reality God, God "the avenger and antagonist," taking Esau's part, and come to bring Jacob's wrong-doing to his remembrance and to convince him of his own weakness and insufficiency. *Until the breaking of the day.* Jacob was strong and determined, and the contest goes on all night.

V. 25. *He touched the hollow of his thigh; the hip socket.* By that one touch the hollow of the strong man's thigh *was out of joint.* "Only a touch from the unseen world, and the proudest heart ceases to beat, the most ambitious brain returns to a child's capacity, the Cæsar becomes a beggar, the Napoleon an exile."

II. Tighter Grips, 26.

V. 26. *And he, the unknown visitant, said, Let me go.* Jacob's strength is gone, but he has realized at last that it is the Lord Jehovah who has grappled him, and he clings therefore the more closely. *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* "From wrestling, he passes to praying, and so his self-confidence and his name Jacob pass away together." (Camb. Bible.) This is an example of the "effectual, fervent prayer" (Jas. 5: 16.) "He wept and made supplication," Hosea says (12: 4).

Jacob went on his way, v. 1. The home instinct asserts itself. Jacob never had felt truly at home with Laban, who had used every method to get the advantage over him, and the man desires to return to that land with which the promises are associated. The lesson is concerned with home-coming, an-

III. Victory and Blessing, 27-30.

V. 27. *What is thy name?* . . . *Jacob.* A stinging question and a shamefaced answer, for the name Jacob "supplanter" was the revealer of his character, and the record of his history, even as the new name to be given him should tell its own tale.

V. 28. *No more Jacob . . . but Israel.* The change of Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah, will be recalled. It was in accordance with the custom of the time to take a new name from any important event or experience of life. "Israel" means "powerful with God." This new name was henceforth so sacred, like that of Abraham and Isaac, that no one in Old Testament times ever assumed it.

V. 29. *And Jacob asked him and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.* Naturally Jacob desired fuller knowledge of this divine visitant. No direct reply is vouchsafed. God is economical of revelation. But *he blessed him there,* and thus gave the bewildered yet uplifted Israel the best possible means of making sure of who He was. The next verse shows that Israel made no mistake.

V. 30. *Jacob called the name of the place Peniel* (or Pennel, v. 31); "the face of God." *I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.* It was said to be impossible to see God and live (Ex. 33: 20; Deut. 5: 26; Judg. 13: 22), yet Moses spoke with Him face to face, (Ex. 33: 11) and in heaven the redeemed shall see His face (Rev. 22: 4). (Peloubet.)

Vs. 31, 32. Jacob carried the marks of the wrestling all his days in the halting thigh; and his descendants to this hour will not eat of the sciatic nerve nor of the blood vessels about it, these being carefully dissected from a hind quarter prepared for food.

APPLICATION

other universal theme, like that of the departure from home. The sailor had come back the captain, the venturesome youth a strong though battered man. The thing still happens.

And the angels of God met him. He had seen them the night he said farewell to