

far back." Jacob is at last brought to an end of that slipperiness and of that duplicity, and in these grips, in the silent watches of the night, compelled to come to an end, the very end, of that lubricity that was in him.

Now, my brethren, that has to come, and the sooner the better for some of us here. God is not such an one as ourselves. God does not look with approval on the tricks of trade by which we have won. God hates our sin with infinite loathing, and unless we gain the victory we are undone. Jacob's God is this kind of being: without holiness thou shalt never see Him. Hear it, O city man! None of this stuff; half dirt, half clean. Without holiness no seed of us shall ever see His face. He that doeth righteousness is righteous. No amount of justification without the deeds of the law, no amount of singing "Rock of ages cleft for me," will do it in it, and through it the strand and fibre of eternal righteousness is not being worked in. Righteousness in thought and word and deed, though the heaven fall. Righteousness!

Jacob was a man who, if you had left him, would have lived to the age of Methuselah without being a bit farther forward. Do you not know somebody vastly like him? He might have lived to the age of Methuselah, and he would just have been on the same beat—sometimes wonderfully spiritual, as we all can be on a Communion Sunday when there is a fine atmosphere round about our souls; and then away back again, back, back into the puddle before Monday night, and never getting much out of it. Now that was not to do for Jacob, and it is not to do for us. The more I study this subject in the light of all that Jacob was, and in the light of that wonderful twenty years, the more I see that indeed and in truth it is, more than words can tell, the awful crisis of his history. He is not to come out of this the same man he went in.

"And there wrestled with him a man, until the breaking of the day." There is a scene—Jacob wrestling. Oh, if there is one thing that Jacob is good at it is wrestling. We have got romantic notions about shepherd herds—the shepherds piping while their sheep are peacefully feeding. We remember romantic pastoral pictures that we have seen about shepherds dancing and piping on oaten straws. It is all wrong, or to a great extent wrong. You are never to think of this Jacob as a weakling—not even as a weakling physically. He was not a weakling physically, any more than was his brother Esau. He was a strong man, but his strength lay not in bigness of bulk. His strength lay in wiriness and suppleness. He is a man to

make a wrestler, a man with lung and breath, sound in wind, a man with a long arm that had a deadly clutch in it—a man whose limbs always seem to land him on his feet no matter how he twists, or how he may be twisted, and that is the thing that Jacob is good at, both mentally and physically. I hear the two of them as through the night Jacob pants, and with side, and hip, and heel he puts in every trick he knows, and tries to grass his adversary. It was a real contest of conflict. It was no dream and no vision of the night, and, as any fellow here knows, who ever tried it, there is nothing that so engages every limb and limb in you as wrestling. To wrestle, you have to have eyes, so to speak all over your body. You need to know how your antagonist is gripping you in weak places behind, you need to know where you can grip him where you do not see him. You have to put your eyes into your hands. Wrestling is mental as well as physical. No stupid, middle-headed dolt ever made a wrestler yet—not he. And Jacob is good at it, and Jacob is being taken upon his own ground and beaten there: wiry, sagacious, crafty, cunning, now pretending to yield, and again springing like a cat; and yet all in vain; tugging, and straining, and making nothing of it, and growing desperate. "Who can this be? Not Esau. At first I thought that it was Esau. It is not Esau. I never met a man who could stand as this man is standing."

And Jacob does not give in. He grows more restless and cunning, and impetuous, until at last *The Man* sees that—as I was going to put it—by fair play is not to win. The man sees that he will not prevail against him. So he puts in and puts on what is more than mortal, and what is more than human. This unknown, this invisible Man puts on or falls back upon Divine resources. He touches him in the sinew, the hollow of his thigh; "and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him." When that takes place wrestling is done. When the limb begins to shrink wrestling is over. You can do no more then. That strong iron sinew collapses, shrivels, and the contest is over, one would say. No, no. It grows more wonderful than ever now. Out of defeat there comes a greater and a nobler victory. The man said, "Let me go for the day breaketh." And Jacob said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? and he answered, Jacob. Then said the man, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

There, they are clinging now. No more wrestling. Nothing to do but just to hold