

## Scripture Lessons.

### THE INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

[BEREAN SERIES.]

#### SECOND QUARTER—STUDIES IN GENESIS.

SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 1873.

LESSON I.—*Israel.—The New Name.*—Gen. xxxii. 24-30.

#### I. GENERAL STATEMENT.

After having resided for many years in Mesopotamia, Jacob is now journeying back to Canaan, with a numerous household and a large train of attendants. Esau is advancing to meet him. In great trepidation Jacob cries to God in prayer. He prevails with God. His name is changed from Jacob to Israel.

#### II. NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

*Topic:* Prevailing with God.

1. A LONELY NIGHT, ver. 24. LEFT. On the north side of the brook Jabbok, vers. 22, 23. (Jabbok falls into the Jordan on the east, midway between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee.) ALONE with God, Jacob agonizes in secret prayer. WRESTLED. Always in the past a wrestler, a contender, he shall now struggle once more for victory. A MAN. The "angel" of the covenant. Hosea xii. 4, 5: The Lord Jesus Christ, who is God manifest in the flesh. He who said, "Before Abraham was, I am." John viii. 58. BREAKING OF..... DAY. The struggle seems to have been long. Partly corporeal, partly spiritual, for he not only "wrestled," but "wept" and "made supplication." Hosea xii. 4.

It is through tears our spirits grow ;

'Tis in the tempest souls expand,

If it but teaches us to go

To Him who holds it in his hand.

—Upham.

Twenty years have passed since Jacob, alone in the night, heard the voice of God above the "ladder" at Bethel. Then he was fleeing from Esau. Now he is again "alone" in the night, waiting by the brook Jabbok to meet Esau, dreading the morrow, and deeply grieved at the recollection

of his sins. How wise to betake himself to God. Glorious privilege of prayer!

By the brook Kidron, centuries afterward, the divine Jesus himself, alone in Gethsemane, poured out strong cries and tears, wrestling with his mighty grief. Matt. xxvi. 36-39.

2. COMBAT WITH THE ANGEL, vers. 24-26. Jacob was full of courage and energy; so much so that the angel PREVAILED NOT AGAINST HIM until HE TOUCHED THE HOLLOW OF HIS THIGH, and put it OUT OF JOINT. This touch shows Jacob his own weakness, and discloses the superhuman power of his conqueror. Helpless now for wrestling, Jacob yet clings with still greater energy to the "angel." The celestial wrestler says, LET ME GO, FOR THE DAY BREAKETH. The victor uses language as of one already vanquished. I WILL NOT.....EXCEPT THOU BLESS ME. These words reveal not only his consciousness of utter helplessness, but equally his strong confidence in the willingness and power of the conqueror to bless him. The whole passage exhibits the chief characteristic of Jacob's life—determined, persistent, struggling for victory.

When I am weak, then am I strong. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

The longer I live the more I am certain that the great difference between men—between the feeble and the powerful, the great and the insignificant—is energy, invincible determination, a purpose once fixed, and then death or victory.—Buxton.

If we would enter heaven we must "strive," "agonize," "earnestly contend." Luke xiii. 24; Jude 3. The violent take it by force. Matt. xi. 12.

How does Jacob's overwhelming earnestness of supplication shame our weak and heartless prayers!

Coleridge, in his later manhood, expressed his sorrow at having written so shallow a sentiment on the subject of prayer as that contained in one of his youthful poems, in which, speaking of God, he had said,

"Of whose all-seeing eye  
Aught to demand were impotence of mind."  
This sentiment he so severely condemned that he thought the act of praying to be in its most perfect form, the very highest energy of which the human heart was capable. The large majority of worldly