

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 1999 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4Ucopy.txt file on this CD.

* * * * *

WRESTLING JACOB
By Duane V. Maxey

* * * * *

Digital Edition 11/27/99
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

CONTENTS

- 1
Jacob's Wrestling at Peniel
- 2
Charles Wesley's Hymn, "Wrestling Jacob"
- 3
Quotations From The Hymn, Wrestling Jacob"
- 4
John Paul's Sermon, "Wrestling Jacob"

* * * * *

Part 1
JACOB'S WRESTLING AT PENIEL

Genesis 32:24-31 "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. 25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. 26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. 27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 28 And he said, 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. 29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. 30 And Jacob called

the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. 31 And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh."

Hosea 12:3-4 "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: 4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us." (KJV)

Hosea 12:3-4 "In the womb he grasped his brother's heel; as a man he struggled with God. 4 He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there." (NIV)

Some may find it interesting to compare the scriptures above with Josephus' account of "Wrestling Jacob":

When Jacob had made these appointments all the day, and night came on, he moved on with his company; and, as they were gone over a certain river called Jabboc, Jacob was left behind; and meeting with an angel, he wrestled with him, the angel beginning the struggle: but he prevailed over the angel, who used a voice, and spake to him in words, exhorting him to be pleased with what had happened to him, and not to suppose that his victory was a small one, but that he had overcome a divine angel, and to esteem the victory as a sign of great blessings that should come to him, and that his offspring should never fall, and that no man should be too hard for his power. He also commanded him to be called Israel, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies one that struggled with the divine angel. These promises were made at the prayer of Jacob; for when he perceived him to be the angel of God, he desired he would signify to him what should befall him hereafter. And when the angel had said what is before related, he disappeared; but Jacob was pleased with these things, and named the place Phanel, which signifies, the face of God. Now when he felt pain, by this struggling, upon his broad sinew, he abstained from eating that sinew himself afterward; and for his sake it is still not eaten by us.

* * * * *

Part 2 CHARLES WESLEY'S HYMN, "WRESTLING JACOB"

Charles Wesley's hymn, "Wrestling Jacob," has been esteemed as one of his best hymns. P. F. Bresee said that "Wrestling Jacob" was "thought by some to be the greatest ever written," and that it "not only delineates the way, but dwells upon the glory and triumph of the obtained experience." In his book, "Lives of Eminent Methodist Ministers," hdm0093, P. Douglas Gorrie wrote: "...we venture the assertion, that Charles Wesley had no superior. The justly celebrated Isaac Watts was no doubt an equal in many respects, and perhaps even a superior in others; but even he candidly admitted that Charles Wesley's "Wrestling Jacob" was superior to anything the former had ever written."

No doubt there are a number of hymns that dwell in part, or in whole, upon Jacob's wrestling at Peniel -- perhaps even more such by Charles Wesley. And, there may have been a number of such hymns prior to Charles Wesley. One of the current hymns about Jacob's wrestling

at Peniel -- one that is oft sung in conservative holiness services is: "I Would Not Be Denied," by C. P. Jones.

Jacob's wrestling at Peniel is a dramatic story in the Bible -- one that is quite easy to remember when once read or heard -- a vivid story that has probably been described by numerous poets and songsters -- but "Wrestling Jacob" by Charles Wesley may surpass them all with its deep insights, well-written lines, and dramatic word-pictures, that "take you to the scene," as it were, and give you a sense of the relentless determination and emotion involved in Jacob's night-long struggle until his happy prevailing and divine blessing at the dawn.

In the 1889 edition of the Methodist Hymnal "Wrestling Jacob" is divided into two parts as #140 and #141, which are presented below. It is requested of those who wish to follow my observations beneath the hymn-words that they read through all of the 5 stanzas of Part 1 and 7 stanza of Part 2.

* * *

=140

"WRESTLING JACOB"

First Part

1

Come, O thou Traveller unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see!
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee;
With thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

2

I need not tell thee who I am,
My misery and sin declare;
Thyself hast called me by my name,
Look on thy hands, and read it there;
But who, I ask thee, who art Thou?
Tell me Thy name, and tell me now.

3

In vain thou strugglest to get free,
I never will unloose my hold!
Art thou the Man that died for me?
The secret of thy love unfold;
Wrestling, I will not let thee go,
Till I thy name, thy nature know.

4

Wilt thou not yet to me reveal
Thy new, unutterable name?
Tell me, I still beseech thee, tell;
To know it now resolved I am;
Wrestling, I will not let thee go,
Till I thy name, thy nature know.

5

What though my shrinking flesh complain,
And murmur to contend so long?
I rise superior to my pain,
When I am weak, then I am strong
And when my all of strength shall fail,
I shall with the God-man prevail.

=141

"WRESTLING JACOB"

Second Part

1

Yield to me now, for I am weak,
But confident in self-despair;
Speak to my heart, in blessings speak,
Be conquered by my instant prayer;
Speak, or thou never hence shalt move,
And tell me if thy name is Love.

2

'Tis Love! 'tis Love! thou diedst for me!
I hear thy whisper in my heart;
The morning breaks, the shadows flee,
Pure, universal love thou art;
To me, to all, thy bowels move;
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

3

My prayer hath power with God; the grace
Unspeaking I now receive;
Through faith I see thee face to face,
I see thee face to face, and live!
In vain I have not wept and strove;
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

4

I know thee, Saviour, who thou art.
Jesus, the feeble sinner's friend;

Nor wilt thou with the night depart.
But stay and love me to the end,
Thy mercies never shall remove;
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

5
The Sun of righteousness on me
Hath rose with healing in his wings,
Withered my nature's strength; from thee
My soul its life and succour brings;
My help is all laid up above;
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

6
Contented now upon my thigh
I halt, till life's short journey end;
All helplessness, all weakness, I
On thee alone for strength depend,
Nor have I power from thee to move;
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

7
Lame as I am, I take the prey,
Hell, earth, and sin, with ease o'ercome;
I leap for joy, pursue my way,
And as a bounding hart fly home,
Through all eternity to prove
Thy nature and thy name is Love.

There are probably many in the Methodist Church of today, and even in the Holiness Movement today, who have heard little or nothing about Charles Wesley's "Wrestling Jacob," but there was a time when it was well-known and oft-quoted.

* * * * *

Part 3 QUOTATIONS FROM THE HYMN, "WRESTLING JACOB"

Searches of the HDM Library revealed quotations of the hymn by the following individuals, quoting from the publications shown, either all or a portion of the stanzas listed:

* * *

NATHAN BANGS, in Vol. 2 of "History of the M. E. Church" (hdm0009): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 1st stanza:

About midnight I was attracted by the shouts of an intimate friend, who had been sometime overwhelmed upon the stand with the power of God. In company with some of the young disciples of Christ, I drew near, while he proclaimed the wonders of redeeming love. I at first looked on with the criticizing eye of cool philosophy, determined not to be carried away with passionate exclamations. Bracing myself as much as possible, I was resolved my passions should not get the ascendancy over my judgment. But, in spite of all my philosophy, my prejudice, and my resistance, my heart suddenly melted like wax before the fire, and my nerves seemed in a moment relaxed. These devout exercises were finally interrupted by a shower of rain; but the showers of grace descended so plentifully that sleep could not be persuaded to visit many of our eyes. So we sang:

'With thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.'

The next day was remarkable on account of the presence of "Him who dwelt in the bush."
The sermons were pointed, lively, and solemn.

* * *

RICHARD R. BLEWS, in "Master Workmen" (hdm0618): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 4th stanza; Part 2, 3rd stanza:

Bishop Clark used to relate the severe mental struggle he had over the question of sanctification. When he heard people testify to it, he thought such an experience was impossible, for he had been raised a Calvinist. Yet his heart cried out for it but his head opposed it. Finally he rolled on his bedroom floor crying out for what he thought was impossible. At last his heart and his head got together and he was gloriously sanctified. Charles Wesley's great hymn, "Wrestling Jacob" fits the case of wrestling Clark.

Wilt Thou not yet to me reveal
Thy new, unutterable name?
Tell me, I still beseech Thee, tell;
To know it now resolved I am:
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know.

My prayer hath power with God; the grace
Unspeakable I now receive;
Through faith I see Thee face to face,
I see Thee face to face, and live!
In vain I have not wept and strove:
Thy nature and Thy name is Love.

* * *

EDWARD MCKENDREE BOUNDS in "Purpose in Prayer" (hdm0420): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 1st stanza; and in "The Possibilities of Prayer" (hdm0427): Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 1st stanza:

From "Purpose in Prayer": -- May we often tarry at Jabbok, and cry with Jacob, as he grasped the angel.

With thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

From "The Possibilities of Prayer": -- Jacob promptly moves out on the promise, but Esau confronts him with his awakened vengeance and his murderous intention, more dreadful because of the long years, unappeased and waiting. Jacob throws himself directly on God's promise by a night of prayer; first in quietude and calmness, and then when the stillness, the loneliness, and the darkness of the night are upon him, he makes the all-night wrestling prayer.

With thee I mean all night to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

God's being is involved, his promise is at stake, and much is involved in the issue. Esau's temper; his conduct and his character are involved. It is a notable occasion. Much depends upon it. Jacob pursues his case and presses his plea with great struggles and hard wrestling. It is the highest form of importunity. But the victory is gained at last. His name and nature are changed and he becomes a new and different man. Jacob himself is saved first of all. He is blessed in his life and soul. But more still is accomplished. Esau undergoes a radical change of mind. He who came forth with hate and revenge in his heart against his own brother; seeking Jacob's destruction, is strangely and wonderfully affected, and he is changed and his whole attitude toward his brother becomes radically different. And when the two brothers meet, love takes the place of fear and hate, and they vie with each other in showing true brotherly affection.

* * *

SAMUEL LOGAN BRENGLE in "Ancient Prophets" (hdm0398): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 3rd stanza; Part 2, 1st and 2nd stanzas:

Are you satisfied, my comrades? If not, begin right now and stir up yourself to seek until you have found. Rouse yourself. Find a secret place and pray, and pray again, and yet again, and you shall 'pray through ' and be satisfied. I know, for I have prayed through. I know, for Jesus has said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; Seek, and ye shall find: Knock, and it shall be opened unto you," and what Jesus has said is true. And what the Lord has done for these two writers, He waits and longs to do for you. He is no respecter of persons, and 'now is the accepted time.' Say to Him as did Charles Wesley:

In vain Thou strugglest to get free,
I never will unloose my hold;
Art Thou the Man who died for me?

The secret of Thy love unfold
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know.

Yield to me now, for I am weak,
But confident in self-despair
Speak to my heart, in blessing speak;
Be conquered by my instant prayer:
Speak, or Thou never hence shalt move,
And tell me if Thy name is Love.

And you will soon be crying out as did Wesley:

'Tis Love! 'tis Love! Thou diedst for me;
I hear Thy whisper in my heart
The morning breaks, the shadows flee,
Pure universal Love Thou art:
To me, to all Thy mercies move,
Thy nature and Thy name is Love.

* * *

PHINEAS FRANKLIN BRESEE in "29 Sermons" (hdm0192): -- Quotation from
"Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 3rd stanza; and in Girvin's "P. F. Bresee, A Prince in Israel"
(hdm0091): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 2, 2nd stanza

From 29 Sermons: -- The destruction of the citadel is an expensive affair, and can only be done by giving up the city, freely, to the Conqueror. When the city was taken the king -- Will -- was not dethroned. The Conqueror came in and continued to abide, because the king willed it so. But when he saw that the destruction of the citadel was imperative, he turned over the whole city to the Conqueror; every power and resource of it was put into His hands, with the earnest cry -- "destroy the citadel!" Jacob's sanctification stands out in history to illustrate this way. He wrestled with the man or angel -- the angel of the covenant. Jacob wanted deliverance. He had taken steps to make things right with Esau. He was loyal to God, but there was in him a great amount of self-life, reasonings, thoughts that were self-contained and self-centered, upon which he depended and in which he trusted. His own shrewdness, sharpness, craftiness, cunning. These were steeped in carnality, and their outcome was sometimes crookedness. He struggled hard to meet the conditions and receive the blessing he needed. Finally the Angel of the Covenant was about to depart.

Jacob did not pay the price; was not ready for the conditions, and the angel said "let me go." But he clung to him in prayer -- "Thou must not go -- I yield, I yield, I will hold out no more."

"In vain thou strugglest to get free,
I never will unloose my hold;
Art thou the man that died for me?
The secret of thy love unfold;

Struggling, I will not let thee go
Till I thy name thy nature know."

Then the angel said, "What is thy name? -- Look into thine own being; see and tell me the depths of thy need? And he answered, "My name is Jacob" -- the crooked perversity of my being I bring to thee. And the angel said, "Thy name shall no more be Jacob, but Israel -- the Prince of God." His nature cleansed; his name changed.

From "P. F. Bresee, A Prince in Israel" by E. A. Girvin:

The knowledge of Him is as mysterious as the way of knowing Him; it is even more so. How those who have known Him have tried to tell it! They have only been able to say, "The mystery so long hid, has been made known unto me by the Spirit."

The longing to know Him finds large expression. David cries out, "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Paul said, "I count all things but loss, that I might know him." Augustine said, "The heart is restless till it rests in Thee." Charles Wesley said, "In vain thou strugglest to get free, I never will unloose my hold."

But when men come to tell what the knowledge itself is, they are silent. John says of that supreme manifestation of Him, "We saw his glory." Paul says, "I heard." There are some things we know that we can give expression to, or describe. There are other things which we can only describe by telling their effect upon us. The knowledge of God seems to be of this class. When men undertake to tell us, they merely begin to describe how they themselves felt.

Job says: "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore, I abhor myself." Isaiah says "I saw the Lord." John Wesley says, "I felt my heart strangely warmed." Charles Wesley says:

"'Tis love! 'tis love! Thou diedst for me!
I hear Thy whisper in my heart;
The morning breaks, the shadows flee;
Pure, universal love Thou art."

* * *

JAMES CAUGHEY in "Revival Miscellanies" (hdm0937): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 2, 5th stanza:

Then shall the "Sun of Righteousness" arise upon the soul "with healing in his wings." All then shall be real, conscious sunshine. God's lovely countenance beams friendship upon the irradiated mind; the soul, through all her powers, feels the glowing influence; or, in the language of the apostle St. Paul, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

How expressive is this language of the apostle! And yet some will tell us that a converted person cannot enjoy thus in such a measure as to remove all doubt whether he be a child of God. But what is that to thee or me, seeing that it is written: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself"? As in nature it is not long from the break of day till sunrise, so I trust the period is not far distant when you shall sing with a glad heart and free,

"The Sun of Righteousness on me
Hath rose, with healing in his wings;
Withered my nature's strength, from thee
My soul its life and succor brings;
My help is all laid up above;
Thy Nature and thy Name is Love."

* * *

JOHN ELLIS EDWARDS in "Life of John Wesley Childs" (hdm0818): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 3rd stanza:

Nor were his devotions (those of John Wesley Childs) the mere offerings of the lips -- a formal, soulless invocation of promised good, such as characterizes the approaches of the formalist; but they were the profound breathings -- the intense flowing out of the heart; the wrestling of a spirit penetrated with an excruciating desire after entire conformity to the Divine will; a contest, in which the strongest energies of the soul were engaged -- a soul animated by a living faith: which, resting its claims on the atonement of the Lamb, and undergirded with the immutable truth of the covenant-keeping God, seemed to breathe forth the high resolve --

"Wrestling, I will not let thee go,
Till I thy name, thy nature know."

He loved to pray! Prayer was the choicest employment of his heaven-aspiring spirit -- his light, his life, his bliss. Through this consecrated channel he was wont to draw nigh to God, to penetrate the ranks that encircle with their blaze the throne, to catch the inspiration which awes, exhilarates, and entrances the "first-born sons of God," and "obtain grace to help in every time of need."

* * *

MAXWELL PIERSON GADDIS in "Foot-Prints of an Itinerant" (hdm0730): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 5th stanza:

During all my agony up to that moment, I had never thought of the tears or prayers of my affectionate mother. They now all passed in review before me. I felt at that moment that there was "efficacy in prayer," and there was hope for my soul. I then looked to the cross by faith, and in a moment my burden was gone. The Sun of righteousness shined into my heart, and I arose and shouted aloud for joy, and continued praising God till the dawning of the morning. I recollect of getting up on a bench

"To tell to sinners round,
What a dear Savior I had found."

My brother William experienced religion the same night, and nearly all of our little band returned home to "glorify God." It was at the solemn and impressive hour of midnight when my chains were severed, and the "voice of my Deliverer" cheered my disconsolate soul.

On our way home, we made the "grand old woods" on the river hills in Kentucky, vocal with our songs of redeeming love. Before our arrival, however, some one had conveyed the intelligence to my dear mother. She saw us coming, and stood at the gate to receive us. The joy of that meeting may be imagined, but it can not be portrayed by human tongue or pencil. I learned this striking fact from my mother, that on the Sabbath night of my conversion she had resolved to spend the forepart of that evening in prayer, for the conversion of her two sons at the camp-ground in Kentucky. Toward eleven o'clock she was powerfully tempted to give up the struggle, just about the time the tempter obtained the victory over my soul at the altar. But not long after this assault, she renewed the conflict, and "prevailed" in driving the enemy from the field. She importuned God with "strong cries and tears," and "wrestled" in mighty prayer with the "angel of the covenant" till nature was nearly exhausted.

"What though my shrinking flesh complain,
And murmur to contend so long?
I rise superior to my pain.
When I am weak then am I strong,
And when my all of strength shall fail,
I shall with the God-man prevail."

At last her prayer was heard. She felt that it was answered. The joy of her spirit was inexpressible. She heard the Savior say, "O, woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

* * *

JOHN WESLEY GOODWIN in "The Secret Place of Prayer" (hdm0350): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 1st and 3rd stanza; Part 2, 7th stanza

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." The forces against the kingdom of heaven in satanic majesty are violent and destructive, the kingdom of heaven in turn is waiting for men of violent faith, violent intercessory prayer, and violent determination to conquer the forces of evil. Importunity carries with it intensified and continued earnestness with pleading in prayer and supplication. We have an example of this in Jacob's all night of prayer. The picture is one of a desperate struggle through the long weary hours of the night, refusing to let go, crying, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." On he struggled still firmly holding in his grasp the object of his search. He struggles through his physical weakness, for the angel has already touched his thigh. The angel insists, "Let me go," but Jacob will not unloose his hold. Thus he clung with his all-conquering hold, he pleaded, he prevailed, he conquered.

"Come O thou traveler unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see,
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with Thee.
With Thee all night I mean to stay
And wrestle till the break of day.

"In vain Thou strugglest to get free,
I never will unloose my hold;
Art Thou the Man that died for me?
The secret of Thy love unfold.
Wrestling I will not let Thee go
Till I Thy name, Thy nature, know.

"Lame as I am, I take the prey,
Hell, earth, and sin with ease o'ercome,
I leap for joy, pursue my way,
And as a bounding hart fly home."

* * *

JOHN S. INSKIP in "A Modern Pentecost" (hdm0325) Edited by Adam Wallace, listed under Multauth -- Quotation of some of the stanzas of "Wrestling Jacob" that were also sung, but the words of Inskip's quotation of the hymn are not given in the text.

Brother Inskip then introduced an experience meeting, urging the propriety of forgetting self, and acknowledging what the Lord had done for us. His own testimony was, "Saved through the blood of the Lamb."

"This fountain ever springing," said a brother, "is no fancy picture. It is to me a reality. I find it fresh and pure every day, and it seems to get sweeter."

Mr. Inskip -- "It is just so with me. It gets better, and makes me better. Glory to God!"

A preacher, converted forty years ago, went to Vineland, and returned with a richer experience. The members of his charge were glad he had launched out into deep water, and could now lead and encourage them in holiness.

Another referred to working power. God had given her one hundred souls last season, and she wanted a deeper baptism for usefulness.

A Presbyterian minister told his joy in knowing Jesus as a full Saviour. "He saves me every moment." This was Rev. Bro. White, who subsequently became "filled with the Spirit," which moved him to prayer for his own congregation, that every member might be sanctified; for the whole denomination, and for all churches, pastors, and people. All knelt while his earnest soul

went up to God. He closed by reconsecrating his life to the promotion of holiness, and there were loud responses, and melting emotions.

An official editor of the M. E. Church next arose. He declared himself to be an incontestable monument of the mercy of God, proving that there was no case too hard for Jesus to convert or to sanctify. Unbelief had paralyzed every fiber of his nature, yet he yearned, O, how constantly, for soul-rest. He described the place and circumstances of his conversion, his call to preach, his early trials, and his conscious need of holiness. This void was now filled. Satan dare not intimate that he was deceived.

Sister Baldwin said these old hymns, "For ever here my rest shall be," &c., taught her the blessed way fifty years ago, and they are just as good today.

A Baptist minister gave some counsel, and testified to the possession of perfect love. Others followed, until a call was made for those now seeking full salvation. Forty-six arose. The unconverted, who wanted salvation were next asked to stand up, and, all over the congregation, persons indicated their desire to come to Christ.

Mr. Inskip -- "Keep steady. Let me ask, are you in earnest; do you mean to have salvation at any cost, or take it in any way God may determine to bless you? If so, raise your right hand." The sign was given, and further questioning brought out many emphatic and pathetic responses. Embarrassment melted away and the altars were soon filled with praying souls.

"Now be very quiet. Don't speak to one another. Tread softly. Here they come. Let us all go down and join them at the mercy seat. Come on, brethren." Seeing us busy with our pencil, Mr. Inskip shouted, "Come down here, Home Journal, you need a baptism with the rest of us. Without the Holy Ghost, the Home Journal isn't worth much. Lord, help here!"

All kneeling, he then recited the hymn, "Wrestling Jacob," some stanzas of which were sung, and before the conclusion, it was given to many to prevail with the angel, for He blessed them there.

* * *

GEORGE BRUBAKER KULP in "Truths that Transfigure" (hdm0512): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 1st stanza

With the vision of God comes the abasement of self. I have seen folks at the altar again and again, and they never get anywhere. Why? Because they are not willing to die to themselves. Along with the vision of God comes the death of self. Oh, here it is, right in this vision, "I am undone ... I am a man of unclean lips." Not only Isaiah, "What is your name?" "My name's Jacob." Oh, names in those days meant something. What is your name? Jacob. What does that mean? Supplanter, Deceiver. Oh, this fellow is coming down, -- I deceived my old father, i deceived my brother, I deceived my father-in-law. He is getting somewhere. That is the trouble; they do not like to make the confession, do not like to acknowledge even to God how mean they are, but He knows all about them. Brother, I never knew how mean I was until God let the light on me. Ah, when the vision

comes you will feel the self-abasement, -- "I am the chief of sinners, I am less than the least of all saints." I wish people would get today where Jacob did. when he got his name changed, -- make the confession and hold on. I remember when I would hear the old-fashioned Methodists sing:

"Come, O thou traveler unknown,
Whom still I hold but cannot see;
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with Thee;
With Thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day."

I have heard that Jacob limped always after the wrestling. And if folks today would get the experience, wrestling till victory came, they never would be the same. Folks would know them by their walk.

* * *

ASBURY LOWREY in "Possibilities of Grace" (hdm0119): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 2nd and 3rd stanzas:

The question raised in my conscience was, whether I so intensely desire this knowledge as to justify the strong phrase, "groaning after it." The language of my soul immediately was, "If I do not, I will until that great grace is obtained. I will pursue it with travailing pangs. I will never relax my efforts, nor ungrasp my hold." The words best suited to my case, and often sung, were these:

"But who, I ask Thee, who art Thou?
Tell me Thy name, and tell me now.

"In vain Thou strugglest to get free,
I never will unloose my hold:
Art Thou the Man that died for me?
The secret of Thy love unfold:
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know."

About three months after this date God, in His love, gave me the evidence of full salvation.

* * *

HESTER ANN ROGERS, in "An Account of the Experience of Hester Ann Rogers" (hdm0629): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 2, 7th stanza (misquotation of line 5 coupled with line 6)

'I all thy power shall prove;
Thy nature and thy name is love'

"Blessed be God, I feel this day an increase of holy nearness to him, and fellowship with him. At the prayer meeting, my body was quite overcome for half an hour together! so did my Lord unfold his fullness of love to my soul. I seemed as in the presence of his glory, confounded and overwhelmed with a sense of his purity, and his justice, his grace and love! and was constrained to lie at his feet in speechless adoration and humblest praise; while my body was covered with a cold sweat, and all around thought I was dying! Well mightiest thou say, O most adorable Jehovah, 'No man can see my face and live!' For, when thou displayest only one faint ray, one glimpse of thy glorious presence, this frail tabernacle is ready to crumble into dust before thee -- But, O! I shall one day be capable of beholding thee face to face! These eyes shall see thy glory! and gaze forever in ecstatic bliss!

* * *

AMANDA SMITH, in her "Autobiography" (hdm0157): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 1st and 3rd stanzas:

It was just enough, with what I had, to get me a round trip ticket to Kennebunk Camp Meeting. Praise the Lord!

Then we got down on our knees and prayed. I said, "Now, brother, you might just as well settle this thing. The Lord is willing to bless you. Why don't you let him? Why not be obedient now? The Lord can do it now if you will just trust Him."

So while kneeling it came to me to sing a verse or two of that old hymn of Charles Wesley's:

"Come, O, Thou traveler unknown,
Whom still I hold but cannot see.
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with Thee," etc.

After singing I said to him, "Now, Brother Palmer, pray and let go."

So he did. My! how he prayed! The Lord broke him all down. He got blessed while he was praying. I prayed a little and then I sang the next verse:

"In vain Thou strugglest to get free,
I never will unloose my hold;
Thou art the man that died for me,
The secret of Thy love unfold.
Thy mercies never shall remove,
Thy nature and Thy name is Love."

Then the blessed Spirit fell upon him, and he launched out into light and liberty. Oh! how he praised the Lord. What a -- morning that was in that little attic room on Amity street. "And still there's more to follow."

* * *

DANIEL STEELE, in "Mile-stone Papers" (hdm0161): -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 2, 2nd stanza

In this twilight state doubts harass the soul, and there is an intense wishing and watching for the day-dawn and the rising sun, To the patient waiter there is at last a tropical sunrise. The darkness flees, the filthy place is cleansed.

"'Tis Love! 'tis Love! Thou diedst for me;
I hear Thy whisper in my heart;
The morning breaks, the shadows flee:
Pure, universal Love Thou art:
To me, to all, Thy bowels move,--
Thy nature and Thy name is Love."

* * *

JOHN F. THOMSON in "The Life and Labors of William Bramwell" (hdm0795) by John F. Thomson: -- Quotation from "Wrestling Jacob," Part 1, 1st stanza:

Mr. Bramwell sometimes held watch-nights in private houses, when out an the circuit. In one of these there appeared nothing in particular at the beginning and at ten o'clock he was about to conclude, but he commenced again and continued to wait an God in prayer till twelve o'clock. At that hour he still felt unwilling to break off, and like Jacob, said in his heart:

"With Thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day."

Shortly after midnight, a young woman cried aloud for mercy; several others were soon in deep distress of soul, and before four o'clock in the morning, no less than fifteen persons were made glad with an assured sense of God's pardoning love. Those meetings were of frequent occurrence in several parts of the circuit and were always attended with blessing to souls.

* * * * *

Part 4
JOHN PAUL'S SERMON, "WRESTLING JACOB"
(or, The Route To The Blessing)

From: Pentecostal Pulpit -- hdm0142

Text: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Gen. 32:26.

In the face of this text, we discern a principle that must characterize the prayer of every successful seeker for the blessing of God, whatever that blessing may be. The principle I refer to is resolution. If we seek God in an unconcerned manner, as though it made but little difference whether we get His blessing or not, we are sure to miss the blessing. If the blessing we seek is pardon or purity -- essentials in the qualification of the soul to stand before the judgment seat of Christ -- it is perfectly consistent for us to feel that we cannot get along another day without it; it is proper for us to fall into a state of scriptural recklessness and cry out, as did Jacob, substantially, I must have the blessing or die! The man who approaches the place of prayer affirming that he will never leave that sacred altar until he gets this blessing, that he will eat and drink no more until his heart receives the divine seal, is quite sure to get the blessing.

We will first glance at the historic background of this text. Jacob was the twin brother of Esau. They had been born and reared in Southern Palestine. When their father, Isaac, was old and his eyes were dim, thinking that the day of his death was near at hand, he sent Esau, as you remember, to kill and prepare venison and spread before him a palatable meal, with the understanding that he would take that occasion to pronounce the patriarchal blessing which would put the son in line with the Messiah and give him a title to the beautiful land of Canaan. Jacob and his mother, feeling that it was the divine plan that Jacob, who had some years before purchased the birthright, should have the blessing, contrived and executed a plan to supplant Esau. Now, Esau was a rugged character, and when he discovered that his brother had stepped in before him, he swore vengeance against Jacob, declaring that he would kill him as soon as his father was dead and the days of mourning were over. When the mother heard this, she conferred with Isaac, and having additional reasons, they sent their son Jacob away to the distant land of Mesopotamia. With budget in hand, this celebrated character started on his distant pilgrimage. When Jacob came to a point a few miles north of Jerusalem, in the evening, he lay down to sleep, pillowing his head upon a stone. While he slept he saw a vision; a ladder reaching from the earth to the skies, upon which the angels of God were ascending and descending, while the Lord stood above it proclaiming His great name and setting seal to the blessing which Isaac had bestowed. When Jacob awoke from his sleep he felt an awful sense of the divine presence, and cried out, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate to heaven." His frame shook with holy fear as he arose at the dawning of the morning and took the stone that he put for his pillow, erecting it for an altar and a monument to celebrate that sacred hour in which he heard the voice of Jehovah, and entered into a covenant with his father's God. From that day forward Jacob was a man of God. Of course, as we read the sketch of his biography which lies between Bethel and Peniel, in the light of this glorious age, we see many faults in his deportment; but the severity of our judgment will be modified when we remember that he was living in an age, not only when they were without the gospel, but when they had no written law. Jacob proceeded on his journey till he reached the home of Laban, a wealthy kinsman in Northern Mesopotamia.

After spending upward of twenty years in this region, having become the head of a considerable family and the possessor of a goodly estate, he is now on his return to the land of his father, supposing that the anger of his brother Esau has cooled. As he journeys he sends a company of his menservants to the land of Edom, hoping to form a treaty of peace with Esau. But the men

made a speedy return and brought the sensational news that Esau seemed to be on the war path, and was coming to meet them with four hundred men. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and fell into a condition of deep distress; but just at this juncture some voice of which we have no account bade him to call upon God, giving himself to prayer. This was an ordeal that had much to do with Jacob's personal experience. It seems that in this hour of distress he got a glimpse of himself and his own needs as he never had before. Step by step the God of his fathers, who had drawn the architecture of his future estate, had lead him to what we in this age call his Gethsemane -- an ordeal which intervenes between each heart and the blessing of full salvation.

Jacob made his way to a place of prayer and began to pour out his soul before God. He spent a night which no human tongue could describe -- the agony, the solemnity, the glory of that awful night! We have no record of the extended and varying speech, mingled with heart-rending cries and groans that came from Jacob's lips that night; no doubt they would make a large book, were it not impossible for written words to express them. At any rate, the key-note of his appeal was, "Bless me." He does not name the blessing he wants, but no doubt there was a sufficient understanding between God and himself. The Scriptures disclose to us the blessing that he received. It was an experience that changed his character; that work of grace which casts out fear; that blessing which endues with "power from on high." It was not common for men of God in that day to be sanctified wholly, perfected in love, and endued with power from on high; this is a New Testament attainment; but some of the patriarchs, by means of a deep self-abasement, an importunate prayer and a mountain-top faith, went beyond their day and partook of the experience that was thousands of years ahead of the times in which they lived.

Like most everybody else, Jacob had inherited some unfortunate traits of character. It may be that his parents were sometimes discouraged with him, and his neighbors prophesied that no good thing would ever come of him; but God knew Jacob, and saw that beneath the rubbish of his moral character there were noble qualities which, if unalloyed and brought to the front, would bless the world. This observation will afford hope for many a character that is beset by hopeless tempers, ungodly ambitions, and many other unhappy traits. The church may never be able to improve such a character, the colleges may dismiss him as a hopeless case, and he may spend his life unknown and underestimated, whereas if God could have had His way with that same individual, He would have brought out the beauty of his character and given him a name which would have been as ointment poured forth.

God followed Jacob. How interesting it is to see how the hand of God was with him and upon him from time to time. His case may not have seemed promising; it may be that it was a task to deal with him; but Jacob had fiber in his moral nature, and God pulled him through.

No doubt there are young people who have latent in their characters the qualities of noblemen, and who go through the world unnoticed and unknown, with an influence and power easily bounded by the limits of one county, and even within a much smaller territory, who, if their carnal traits were nailed to the cross by the sanctifying Spirit, and the excellencies of their souls were brought out by the touch of the Master Workman who framed the worlds, the county could not hold them, perhaps the state could not hold them, and as is true in many instances, even where the hero has but an ordinary talent, the nation and even the world itself would fail to contain the power and glory of their influence and labors. No doubt if Jacob had not had his Peniel, we would have

known but little of him; he would not have been called a prince of God, and the spiritual Church of all the ages would not have been named for him as it is. The secret of his great promotion and the honor which God bestowed upon him, which is greater than the highest honors that men can bestow, and more to be appreciated than the chair of the president or the throne of an earthly king, is explained in the fact that he succeeded in letting God have His way with him.

Every human soul inherits the carnal mind, or what is called original sin. Its prominent development in Jacob was dishonesty, or a species of covetousness. This is indicated by his name, which means supplanter. Men were frequently named by inspiration according to character in those days. If you will study your own experience and the experiences of others, you will notice that in every heart the carnal mind heads up in one or two forms of besetting sin. With some, it is covetousness; with some it is pride; with others an evil temper, and with others something else. The qualities may be latent in the character of a Christian, so that his nearest friends may not be able to discover the unhappy tendencies of his heart; but the individual knows; if he is a conscientious Christian, he sees himself from day to day in the mirror of God's truth, and groans inwardly because of his nonconformity to the "good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Jacob did not have the means of illumination that we have; he had no transparent mirror in which to examine himself from day to day, as we do; it took an ordeal to reveal to him the depravity of his soul, but the ordeal has come, and with it a revelation of the possibilities of faith; and Jacob, with a holy desperation, has hurled himself upon Jehovah's altar and cried, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!"

We notice that notwithstanding the unfavorable surroundings and gloomy prospects, Jacob wastes no time praying over surroundings and prospects, but prays for himself. There comes a time when it is modest to pray for yourself. There comes a time when it is not consistent to pray for any but yourself. The difficulty with many of us is lack of definiteness. We pray all over land and sea in such a general way, until no definite results can be hoped for. Jacob seems to have received a revelation of the fact that when a man gets right in his heart, it improves his surroundings. There is a new brightness to the sun, there is a new music in the singing of the birds, and a new glory in all the handiwork of God. If your heart conforms to the heart of Christ and your footsteps pattern after Him, it will occur to you that the home folks are more agreeable, and the domestics more amiable. A new beauty and delight will come into your life which it will be hard for earth's turmoil to disturb. There seems to have been a definite understanding between God and Jacob as to what he was pleading for, when he said "Bless me." We know that he had no reference to the ordinary things, which we call blessings, such as sunshine and showers and happy sensations; he had come for a work to be done in his heart, and while the language of his lips may seem to us indefinite, the cry of his heart was perfectly definite.

We may wonder why it is that Jacob prayed all night. Are we to offer long prayers in order to persuade God? No, God is always disposed to give whatever is in accordance with His will, if faith appropriates the gift. We tarry long in prayer in order that we may get on believing ground. The wrestling is not that we may subdue God, but that God may subdue us. The human heart is capable of having many desires at one time. These may be of various magnitudes. The desire for the thing for which we are praying must outshine all the other desires before we can get the blessing. The secret of prevailing prayer is to cherish and give vent to a certain desire in the heart until, by exercise and nourishment, this desire becomes stalwart and self-asserting, so that it can

hurl all of our minor desires into the background of our natures, put its foot upon the neck of its greatest rival and create a violent agitation throughout the soul and body of the man. There are many ways to explain the profit of long, secret prayers ; we have only referred to them in their relation to prevailing prayer; but the long, secret prayer is profitable in the sense that we wait upon God, keep company with Him in a peculiar way, and thus gather strength and virtue from Him that otherwise we could not have.

Jacob could not get his blessing as long as he had other desires equally as great as the desire for the blessing, even though the other desires were legitimate. When you are seeking forgiveness of sin, or the sanctification of your soul, you must come to that extreme point where you would rather have the work of grace than anything else under heaven. If a million dollars would suit you better than the forgiveness of your sins, you could not be forgiven. If the presidency of the United States would suit you as well as the inheritance of sanctification, you are not a qualified candidate for holiness. The poet had the scriptural idea when he said,

"'Tis worse than death my Lord to love,
And not my Lord alone."

We see from this sentiment, and also from the sentiment that was evidently in the heart of Jacob that night, that the desire for God's blessing must be stronger than death before we reach the climax of prevailing prayer. Physical comfort must be no consideration. We must be willing to resort to any inconvenience and suffer any degree of humiliation in order to get the blessing. The blessing is yours when the conditions are met, and you come to where you cannot do without it any longer. If there lurks in your heart an idea that you could manage to content yourself without the blessing, you cannot have the blessing.

In their approach towards the blessing of full salvation, many seekers reach a juncture where they are perplexed; they become a puzzle to themselves; conditions are met so far as they know, and they wonder why it is that they have not the blessing. Well, there is always a reason. If there were no reasons, they could have the blessing now. Of course, there is something in the way, and if the seeker will make a guess, the chances are he will locate the trouble at the first guess; but if he fails, and will hold on to God with the tenacity that is revealed in this text, the Lord will put His finger on the trouble in due time.

The steps that Jacob made in order to reach the fullness of the blessing of Christ, are typical of the steps that we must make today, when we seek our Pentecost. The Scriptures indicate to us the relation that Jacob's possessions held in his mind. He sent his flocks and herds and menservants across the brook; then he sent the maidservants with their children; after this, he separated himself from Leah, and her children, sending them across; this left him alone with Rachel and her babe, the dearest treasures of his heart; but he separated himself from them, and went alone to the place of prayer. You see it is natural for us to give up our inferior things first, consecrating our possessions according to their value until we come to some cherished ambition, valued position, or precious treasure which we idolize above all things else. Many seekers stop here; and while they may fancy that their consecration is complete according to the will of God, it is only to the limit of their own wills. Such people are a long ways from the fullness of the blessing. The separation of Jacob from his possessions and loved ones, and the lonely night of

prayer represent to our minds the fact that we must take the lone way with Jesus. The Scriptural way is a narrow way. Two cannot walk side by side in the path of consecration. Your friends must go in ahead of you, or behind you, if examples must play a part, so the thing for you to do is to enter in today. After Jacob has taken the initial steps and dealt with the problems around the edge of the subject, he arrives at himself. One whole night has to be spent on Jacob. People may think that their companions, their neighbors, or their peculiar circumstances in life are the greatest barriers between them and holiness, but this is usually untrue; as a rule every man is his own worst enemy. Others may stand in our light, but we are more apt to stand in our own light.

After Jacob had passed through the season of prayer which we have already described, having to an extent prevailed with God, he arrived at the last condition. Jehovah said unto him, "What is thy name?" This was not a random question. The design of it was to bring a final confession from the very depths of Jacob's soul. It seems that to acknowledge the doctrine of inherited depravity, and confess the Bible teaching of sin in believers, is a hard thing for some great men to do. You see it was about the last thing that Jacob arrived at; but he made this acknowledgment and confession all in one, when with bleeding heart and anxious mind, he said, "My name is Jacob." Conditions were then met. The opportunity of God had come; the man had reached his extremity; a pause of eloquent silence occurred, an exhausted and self-surrendered conqueror stood with bated breath, while an almighty Savior gave His heart the touch that told throughout the balance of Jacob's lifetime -- the memory of which he celebrates today among the redeemed on high. It seems to me that there is an eloquence and a beauty clustered around this little phrase of scripture that we seldom meet with any where else: "And he blessed him there."

God changed the patriarch's name to Israel, which means a prince, giving as his reason, that Jacob had prevailed with God and with man, and was endued with power. Jacob had gained a victory by way of the throne. When he reached this mountain-top of faith and got this blessing at Peniel, he conquered all the foes for the balance of his life. Disappointment, pain and death were beneath his feet. Once for all he had the victory, a lasting victory. No man has the victory as he ought to have it until he gets it in his soul. Disappointments will depress us, trials will irritate us, the death of loved ones will overshadow us with an undissolving cloud, and the ghost of misfortune will haunt us, no matter how strong we may be in mind or body, nor how rich we may be in purse, unless we have the complete victory in our souls.

When Jacob met Esau, the sturdy red man broke down and wept. The battle had already been fought, and the victory won. How could Esau smite the Lord's anointed? How could he strike a man who, though physically wasted, was filled with the beauty of holiness and covered with the mantle of God?

Jacob descended from that place of prayer, not only a mightier man, but a man with a transparent character; his life told for God after that. You may discover irregularities and sins in his life up till that day, but after that he took sides with God, not only against his enemies, but against his friends; not only against his friends, but against his loved ones, and, if necessary, against himself. This fully represents to us the attitude of a man who is sanctified in Jesus Christ. Jacob had some family trouble after that, but while his own children did wrong, and showed the depravity of their natures, Jacob took sides with God in the matter.

Israel was held in high esteem by Jehovah. The last we hear of this honored patriarch, when he is ripe with age, and his hairs are bleached into a crown of glory, he is leaning upon his staff on the verge of his grave, pronouncing a blessing upon his posterity. God pulled back the curtain which veils the great future, and Jacob gazed down through the vista of ages, and saw the battles and triumphs of Zion, and said in prophetic strains; "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." God honored him with a vision of the glories of the New Testament Church, and cheered his heart with the hope of a redeemed humanity through the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and he passed to his reward.

For more material on the same general subject, see also: "The Sunrise Blessing" by Beverly Carradine from "A Box of Treasure," hdm0028 -- "A Character Study of Jacob" by E. A. Ferguson in "Gold From God's Mint," hdm0469 -- "Jacob's Return to Canaan" by William M. Smith in "Twenty Lessons in Genesis," hdm0907 -- "Wrestlers With God" by Samuel Logan Brengle in "Heart Talks on Holiness," hdm0253 -- the booklet titled: "The Sunrises Blessing," hdm0250, by John Marvin Hames.

* * * * *

THE END