

what was right. I thoroughly believe that Jacob intended to keep that pledge he made; but poor Jacob made a mistake because he did not understand the word of the psalmist when he said: "The human heart is deceitful above all things." He failed to understand the strength of his enemies and the foes that were against him, and he failed to detect the evil influence of his own life.

What, then, is the secret of the failure in Jacob's life? I believe that the secret of the failure in Jacob's life to keep the pledge and vow that he made with God was simply the fact that that man failed to set himself against the natural bend of his disposition to do that which was wrong. Jacob was a deceiver, wasn't he? You remember how he deceived his old father, Isaac; when Isaac was to give the patriarchal blessing to his son, Esau, he said, "Esau, go out and get a kid and bring it in, and we will get a blessing even now before I depart." Jacob and his mother brought in the bowl of soup to the old man, and Jacob said, "Father, here is that which thou dost want, and here am I for thy blessing," and the father said, "Art thou Esau?" and the father "Yes," and deceived his old father.

Esau had been out on a fishing trip and he came in tired and hungry. Jacob said, "Here, Esau, you want something to eat," and Esau said, "Yes. I am really starving; I must have something." "Give me the birthright and I will give you your supper." So in this evilly insinuating way he took away from his brother the birthright that belonged unto him; he deceived his brother. I believe that he deceived himself because he thought himself that he would be able to make a success of life in this way of trickery and deceit and wrong, and he could not do it. I think he tried to deceive God, and God would not be deceived. What was the matter with this man's life? He did not set himself to correct the evil tendencies and evil dispositions of his life.

In this covenant and consecration meeting, when we make our covenant with God, we know, for God will surely point it out to us, what is the disposition of our lives towards sin. I believe that every man has a tendency towards some line of sin. If you will study your life to-night, and look over the past year and the year before and see the failures and mistakes that have been incident to the pathway along which you have come to the present, you will find that there is some line of life in which you are very apt to go astray unless you are very careful in setting yourself up against that evil way.

Notice, friends, that Jacob had a splendid opportunity of correcting the evil in his life if he so desired to do. I love to think of that scene in Bethel's plain when Jacob and the angel met face to face, and when they had struggled and wrestled there a long time, on looking up he saw the breaking of the morning. The angel said: "Let me go for the morning breaks. 'I will not let thee go.' What is thy name?" and he said: "My name is Jacob — that is deceiver, that is the tendency of my life; I cannot forget that." And I read between the lines a great pathos in that man whose soul is stirred with higher aims and loftier ambitions. "And the angel of God put his hand upon Jacob and said, 'Thou shalt be no more Jacob, but Israel,' and Israel means Prince of God."

O what a splendid opportunity! What a chance to have done with the things that were past and to start a new life under the power of the Omnipotent

God comes into a man's life and says: "Thou hast been, and thou canst be." What an opportunity, friends, to-night as we bow before God to say, "O God, I have failed; I have sinned; I have made mistakes; I have got a tendency to be proud or haughty or evil (?) or untruthful, or sinful, or selfish. To-night I want blessing, and God has the power of his Holy Spirit upon our hearts, and says: 'I will; be thou no more Jacob, but be thou Israel, the Prince of God.'"

How many of us young people to-night leave this beautiful island, and how many of you people that belong here might go back to your fishing boats and your farm houses and leave behind the old life and enter into the new life if you will only let God teach you to-night and say: "I will have done with the things that are past; I will correct the evil tendencies of my life, for God says I may be no more Jacob, but I may be Israel, the Prince of the power of God."

That is my appeal to you, friends, to-night; that is my thought to you to-night, that in this service and in this meeting that you think of God as being present, and that you take hold upon God and say unto God: "I will not let Thee go until Thou dost bless me." And then remember that when God's blessing comes we are to set ourselves, in conjunction with God, to correct the evil tendencies of our lives, and to see to it that whereas we have an inclination to do wrong, as Jacob did, that we do not allow that wrong to overcome our lives, but that we conquer. The doing of evil and breaking of pledges is always detrimental not only to our own lives, but to the lives of our fellow men. My friends, to-night you can do right and help and please people in your right doing; you cannot do wrong and not hurt somebody by your wrong doing. If we do the wrong thing, if we fail to keep our pledge, if we fail in our societies to keep our covenants together, we bring an influence that is wrong and evil to bear upon other lives.

Do you know that the greatest evil that comes into the world of ours is not from the people who are outside the church of God, and who never make any pledges to keep God's covenant, to do God's work, and to do God's will. Somebody said here to-day that the evil of the liquor traffic did not exist because the liquor men counted it to exist, but because the church of God said that it might exist, and I do not know but what that is true; but I do know this, the greatest damage and harm that comes to the weak Christians comes from those derelict (?) sin-sick souls, whose names are on God's covenant and church book, and who fail to keep their covenants with God. Men like Jacob that drift away from God. What an evil influence and evil example they set before men!

If you study this man's life again you will find that this thing ceases. There came a time in his life when he met the Lord again, and God said to him "Go thou to Bethel." He said: "I will go to Bethel," and when Jacob gathered his household and said, "We will now go to Bethel and serve God," the first thing he did was to break up and bury the household gods that had been in his home so long. Then the scripture tells us that he went up to Bethel to be no more Jacob, but to be known in subsequent history as Israel — "the Prince of the power of God."

I look back in my life to-night and I see so many times that I have made these covenants with God. Do you come

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with me and see them in your own life? Shall we not at the closing night of our convention, that has been the best perhaps that we have ever had in some respects, shall we not to-night hear among us the still small whisper of God saying: "Be no more Jacob, but be thou known as Israel?" What shall do? Let us to-night in this church bury our ideals; let us to-night give up our sins; let us to-night take out of our lives all that keeps us from God; let us set ourselves to-night to study the natural bend of our lives toward evil, and to ask God to help us to stand up against it and face it, and down (?) it in his strength, and then let us go up to our homes, which is Bethel, remembering God, that he will help us to make our covenant and our pledge, and not do like Jacob when the time came — not keep it, but keep it, as Jacob did in his subsequent days.

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