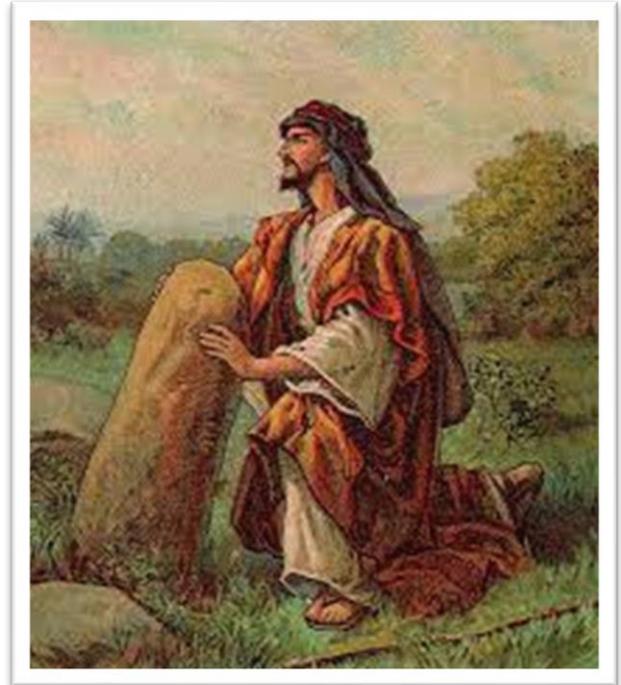


Jacob

Rebecca knew that Esau had no share in the Divine Mystery. Esau was dull, rough, and slothful; Jacob was very active and shrewd, more like his mother. Isaac, however, was more partial to Esau as his firstborn. Esau was often away from home hunting. Rebecca often pondered how she could procure the birthright, the Blessing, for Jacob, and she taught him how to go about buying it. The mess of pottage for which Esau sold it was composed of vegetables, meat, and green leaves like lettuce. Esau came home tired from the chase. Jacob coaxed him, and received the surrender of the birthright. Isaac was at this time very old and blind. He feared he would soon die, and consequently



he was anxious to give his Blessing over to Esau. Rebecca, who knew that Jacob should and must have it, could not persuade Isaac to give it to him. She was on that account very much afflicted, and went around quite anxious. When she found that Isaac would no longer be withheld from imparting the Blessing, and that he called to him Esau who was in the neighborhood, she laid her plans. She told Jacob to hide when his brother came in that he might not be seen. Isaac ordered Esau to go bring him something of his hunting. Then Rebecca sent Jacob to get a kid from the flock, and hardly was Esau gone when the dish for Isaac was prepared.

Esau's best clothes, which Rebecca now put upon Jacob, consisted of a jacket very like Jacob's own, only stiffer and embroidered on the breast in colors. Esau's arms and breast were covered with thick, black hair like wool, his skin being like the skin of an animal; therefore Rebecca wrapped a part of the kid's skin around Jacob's arms and put a piece upon his breast where the jacket lay open. This jacket differed from the one usually worn only by the amount of work upon it. It was slit at the sides, and passed over the head by a hole which was bound with soft, brownish leather. The side slits were fastened together with leather strings, and when a girdle was worn over it, the fullness around the breast served as a pocket. No garment was worn under this jacket, which was sleeveless and left the breast bare. The headgear and apron worn with the jacket were brownish, or gray. I saw Isaac feeling Jacob's breast and hands where Esau was full of hair. I saw

that he wavered a little, he was troubled and doubting. But then came the thought that, notwithstanding his doubts, it was certainly Esau and that God willed him to have the Blessing. And so he made over to Jacob that Blessing which he had received from Abraham, and Abraham from the angel. He had, with Rebecca's assistance, previously prepared something mystical which was connected with it; viz., a drink in a cup.

The other children of the Patriarchs knew not of it. Only the one that received the Blessing knew of the Mystery which, however, still remained to him, as to us the Blessed Sacrament, a mystery. The cup was rather flat on one side. It was transparent and shone like mother-of-pearl. It was filled with something red, something like blood, and I felt that it was Isaac's blood.

Rebecca had helped to prepare it.

When Isaac blessed Jacob, they were alone. Jacob bared his breast and stood before his father. Isaac drew the hand with which he gave the Blessing from Jacob's forehead straight down to the abdomen, from the right shoulder to the same point, and the same from the left shoulder. Then he laid his right hand on Jacob's head and his left upon the pit of his stomach, and Jacob drank the contents of the little cup. And now it seemed as if Isaac delivered to him all things, all power, all strength, while with both hands he took, as it were, something out of his own person and placed it in that of Jacob. I felt that this something was his own strength, that it was the Blessing. All this time, Isaac was praying aloud. While giving over the Blessing, Isaac sat erect on his couch; he became animated, and rays of light streamed from him.

When Isaac drew his hand down in giving the Blessing, Jacob held both of his open and half-raised, as the priest does at the but when the father merely prayed, Jacob kept them crossed on his breast. When Isaac delivered the Blessing to Jacob, the latter received it and crossed his hands under his breast like one who is holding something. At the close of the ceremony, Isaac laid his hands upon Jacob's head and upon the region of the stomach, and then Jacob received the cup out of which he had drunk.

When the imparting of the Blessing had been accomplished, I saw Isaac swooning, either from exertion or from having actually given over and parted with his strength. But Jacob was radiant, quickened, full of life and strength.

And now came Esau from the hunt.

When Isaac discovered that the Blessing had been transferred to the wrong one, he had no regret, he recognized it to be God's will. But Esau was mad with rage, he tore his hair. Still, in his fury there seemed to be more envy of Jacob than grief for the lost Blessing.

Both Esau and Jacob were full-grown men, over forty years old at the time of the transfer of the Blessing. Esau already had two wives who were not much

liked by his parents. When Rebecca saw Esau's rage, she sent Jacob away secretly to her brother Laban. I saw his departure. He wore a jacket that reached to the waist, an apron as far as the knees, sandals on his feet, and a band wrapped round his head. In his hand was a shepherd's staff, a small sack containing bread hung from his shoulder, and under his arm was a flask. This was all he took with him. I saw him hur-rying off followed by the tears of his mother. Isaac had blessed him a second time, and commanded him to go to Laban, and to take a wife in his new home. Isaac and Rebecca had much to endure from Esau. Rebecca especially had much sorrow.

I saw Jacob, on his journey to Mesopotamia, lying asleep on the spot where Bethel afterward stood. The sun had set. Jacob lay stretched on his back, a stone under his head, his staff resting on his arm. Then I saw the ladder that Jacob beheld in his dream, and which in the Bible is described as "standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven." I saw this ladder rising up to heaven from Jacob where he lay upon the earth. It was like a living genealogical tree of his posterity. I saw below on the earth, just as those genealogical trees are represented, a green trunk as if growing out of the sleeping Jacob. It divided into three branches which arose in the form of a triangular pyramid whose apex reached the heavens. The three branches were connected by other smaller ones that formed a three-sided pyramidal ladder. I saw this ladder surrounded by numerous apparitions. I saw on it Jacob's descendants, one above another; they formed the ancestry of Jesus according to the flesh. They often crossed over from side to side, stepping past and even before one another. Some stood back and others from the opposite side stepped before them, according as the germ of the Sacred Humanity was clouded by sin and then again purified by continence until at last the pure flower, the Holy Virgin in whom God willed to become Man appeared on the highest point of the ladder touching the heavens. I saw Heaven open above her and disclose the splendor of God. God spoke thence to Jacob.

I saw Jacob awake the next morning. First, he built a round foundation of stone on which he laid a flat stone, then he raised upon this the stone which he had placed under his head the preceding night. Lastly he made a fire and offered something in sacrifice; he also poured something into the fire on the stone. He knelt while praying, and I think he kindled the fire as the Three Kings did, that is, by friction.

I saw Jacob in many other places also, at Bethel for instance, as he journeyed to Laban, staff in hand. I saw him at Aion where he had been before and where he repaired a cistern which later on became John's fountain of baptism. I saw him even at that early period, praying at the spot Mahanaim.

He begged Almighty God to protect him and also to keep his clothes from becoming shabby lest, on his arrival in Mesopotamia, his uncle Laban on account of his miserable appearance might not acknowledge him. Then he beheld two troops of angels hovering on either side of him like two armies. This was shown him as a sign of God's protection over him, and of the power which should be given unto him. The fulfillment of this vision, he saw on his return journey.

Then I saw him going further eastward, along the south side of the river Jabok, and passing a night on the spot where he afterward wrestled with the angel. Here too, he had a vision.

On Jacob's return from Mesopotamia, his encampment lay east of the encampment of the subsequent Jabesch Gilead. I saw Laban, his father-in-law, following him in pursuit of his lost idols. He overtook him, and words ran high between them on the score of the idols, for Jacob did not know that Rachel had secretly brought them with her. When Rachel saw that her father, who had been searching the whole encampment for his lost treasures, would soon reach her tent, she took the stolen idols and hid them under a heap of fodder not far from her own tent. The idols were metal dolls, about two and a half arms long in swaddling clothes. The heaps of fodder were on a slope of the valley south of the Jabok, and were for the use of the camels. Rachel muffled herself up and sat down on one of them, as if she were sick and had retired for awhile. Many other women sat like her on the other heaps. On a similar, though somewhat larger straw heap, I have seen the leprous Job sitting. That on which Rachel sat was of the size of a full harvest wagon. They brought quantities of fodder with them on the camels, and on the way often laid in fresh supplies of it. These idols had long been a subject of scandal to Rachel, and she carried them off merely to disengage her father from them. Jacob had sent messengers to Esau, of whom he was in dread. They returned with the news that Esau was at hand with four hundred men. Then Jacob divided his whole train into two bands. His best flocks he divided into several and sent them on to Esau. He led his followers to Mahanaim where he had for the second time the vision which he had seen on his setting out; viz., the vision of the angelic armies. He said: "With my staff did I set out, but I am now richer by two armies." He now understood the signification of that first vision.

When his whole train had crossed the Jabok, Jacob sent his wives and children over by night, and remained alone. Then he ordered his tent to be erected on the spot where, on his journey from Palestine, he had seen the face of God. He wanted to pray there by night. He ordered his tent to be closed on all sides, and bade his servants retire to some distance. Then I saw

him crying with his whole heart to God. He laid all things before Him, especially his great anxiety with regard to Esau. The tent was open above, that he might better send forth his sighs to Heaven.

Then I saw him wrestling with the angel. It took place in a vision. Jacob arose and prayed. Then there descended from above a light in which was a great luminous figure, which began to wrestle with Jacob, as if wanting to push him out of the tent. They wrestled here and there, up and down, in all directions through the tent. The apparition acted as if wanting to draw Jacob toward all the cardinal points, but Jacob always faced about to the center of the tent. This struggle prefigured the fact that Israel, though pressed on all sides, should not be forced from Palestine.

But when Jacob once again faced to the middle of the tent, the angel grasped him by the hip. I saw this took place when Jacob, who was wrestling in vision, wanted to cast himself upon his couch, or sink back upon it. When the angel touched Jacob's hip and at the same time did what he wanted to do, he said to the latter who was holding him fast: "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking!" Then Jacob ceased struggling and awoke from his vision. Seeing the angel of God still standing before him, he cried: "No, I will not let thee go until thou bless me!" He felt the need of God's blessing, for he knew that strength had departed from him and that Esau was at hand. Then spoke the angel: "How art thou called?" (This belonged to the Blessing. Abram also at his Blessing was named Abraham). He answered: "Jacob." Then said the angel: "Thou shalt be called Israel, for thou hast wrestled with God and men and hast not been vanquished." Then Jacob said: "How art thou called?" And the angel answered: "Why dost thou ask me how I am called?"—which words signified: "Dost thou not know me? Hast thou not already learned who I am?" And Jacob knelt before him, and received the blessing. The angel blessed him as Abraham had been blessed by God, as Abraham had imparted the blessing to Isaac, and Isaac to Jacob; viz., in three lines. This blessing was especially to ensure patience and perseverance. And now the angel vanished. Jacob saw that the dawn was breaking, and he named the place Phaniel. He ordered his tent to be taken down, and he crossed the Jabok to his family. And now the sun arose upon him. He limped on the right side, for he had there been deprived of strength.

When Esau turned off, Jacob went with all his family, his servants, and his herds, to Mahanaim and took possession of the country from Socoth to the hill Aion. He dwelt ten years at Aion. He afterward extended his settlement westward from Aion and over the Jordan to Salem. His tents reached to where Sichem dwelt, for there he bought a field.

I saw Dina walking around there with her maids, and conversing out of

curiosity with the Sichemites. I saw Sichem caressing her, for which reason her maids went away, and he took her with him into the city. This was the cause of great sorrow to Dina while bloodshed and slaughter accrued from it to the Sichemites. Sichar¹ at that time was not yet a great city. It was built of large, square stones and had only one gate.

The Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had more strength in their right side than in their left; it was not, however, noticeable, for their garments were wide and full. There was in their right side a certain fullness like a swelling. It was the Holy Thing, the Blessing, the Mystery. It was luminous, in shape like a bean, and it contained a germ. The firstborn received it from the father, hence the prerogatives of primogeniture. Jacob received it instead of Esau, because Rebecca knew that he was the one destined for it. In his struggle with the angel, it had been taken away from Jacob, though without producing a wound. It was like a drying up of the swelling. But after the removal of the Blessing, Jacob no longer lived so securely, so immediately under God's protection. While he possessed the Blessing, he was like one strengthened by a Sacrament; afterward, how-ever, he felt himself humiliated, he was careworn and he experienced great troubles. He was conscious of the Blessing's having been withdrawn from him, therefore he would not let the angel go until, by a benediction, he had strengthened him. Joseph later on, when in the prison of Pharaoh, in Egypt, received that same Blessing from an angel.