

night is around us. In the soul-struggle that ensues, God wrestles with us. Our prayers seem to us unanswered. How then shall a man contend with God? But is not the case of Jacob illustrative of a great general principle in God's dealings with His people? He weakens their strength by the way. They are made to feel their own utter impotency, but it is only that they may, when in the depths of weakness and distress, be led to feel the Divine energy of their living Head. The recorded experiences of David in many of the Psalms are illustrations of this. Paul too knew the intensity of this conflict of spirit, this wrestling of God with him, when he besought the Lord thrice that the thorn in the flesh might depart from him; and in his case too the crushing trial was followed by a most illustrious victory. And so still, out of weakness God's people are made strong. God sometimes so shuts up the soul, that there seems to be no advance from before and no retreat from behind—then He so weakens the spirit that it seems to be incapacitated for further struggle, and can neither stand nor go; but it is in that very moment of mortal weakness that He enables His servant with the triumph of faith to take hold of some covenant promise, to believe against hope, and then the power of Christ is made to rest upon him. Nay more, his strength is in exact proportion to his weakness. 'When I am weak then I am strong.' The time of our sorest trial is the occasion of the Lord magnifying His grace in us. Most gladly therefore may we glory in our infirmities, when we are enabled to say, "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation."

Let us learn the power of faith. As Jacob clung to the very hand that seemed put forth only to cast him down, so faith cleaves to God in the darkest and stormiest hours. Faith trusts on, even when no answer is vouchsafed, yea when God seems to be hiding His face from us. It is easy to trust when the sun shines, and all is well with us. Faith triumphs in the dark and stormy day. So with the Syrophenician woman, Christ answered her not a word, still she cried to him. The disciples said, "Send her away away," but clung the closer. At length the Lord spoke to her, but it was as though he too would cast her off. 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she cast herself at His feet, and cried "Lord help me." Again he seemed to deny her. "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." Surely this will prove too much for her faith; no, her faith rises with the emergency. Thankfully will she take the crumbs that fall from the table, the dog's portion will suffice for her. This was the victory. Our Lord no longer denies the blessing sought. Such is ever faith's triumph. As the Lord put Himself in Jacob's power when he said, "Let me go," so still he puts himself, as it were, in the petitioner's power in the exceeding great and precious promises. What power does this give to the prayer of faith! "If we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us."

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### THE EXPECTED UNION.

Union is the question of the day with the Presbyterian Church of Canada and the United Presbyterian Church. Heartily in favour of this union as we are, we count it a duty to offer the following observations, with a view to remove certain mistakes that are afloat regarding the terms on which it may be accomplished.

Christian forbearance is urged as the only possible ground on which the union can be consummated. This we believe; but the question remains, How far shall this forbearance go? Shall it extend to every possible opinion as to the civil magistrate's duty; or shall a recognition of that duty, to a *certain extent*,