

sence, thou hast heard my voice, thou hast experienced my power, and yet hast thou not known me ? It reminds us of what He said, long ages after this, to one of his disciples. In the new name which he had received the MAN was revealed : Israel, the prince of God. Wherefore then should he ask after His name ? God does reveal Himself in his name ; but far more clearly in the experience of communion with him. It is one thing to know the name of God, to know God Himself is quite another thing. This last had been vouchsafed to Israel : he knew God as giving him strength in weakness, and victory in trial. He who had wrestled with Israel was the same glorious one who afterwards revealed Himself saying, "I am the resurrection and the life" ; to know Him is life Eternal. His name is LOVE : the highest blessedness of life is devotedness to Him.

It is added, "And he blessed him there." Jehovah blessed the earnest suppliant, and in the deep and spiritual experience of that blessing he went forth no longer the supplanter, but the Prince—a more leal and earnest, and a braver man. He has a new spirit as well as a new name. We doubt not but that long before this Jacob was a child of God—what took place at Bethel is proof enough of this. But up to this time he retained much of his natural character, and we are pained to find him if not untrue, at least only half-sincere, and consequently timid and weak. But from this time nearly all traces of this natural timidity and proneness to resort to stratagem, rather than to meet difficulties and charges manfully, disappear, and Israel is a more unselfish and altogether a truer man. Thoroughly honest now, he goes forth to meet his impetuous brother ; no longer shrinking like a coward, but with the light of holy courage, as well as of true affection beaming in his eye. The brothers meet, they fall on each other's necks and weep, and in that brotherly embrace Israel is the prince who prevails by love. What though he goes from Peniel in helplessness and weakness halting on his thigh ; his weakness is strength, for in God he hath righteousness and strength :

"Contented now, upon my thigh  
I halt, till life's short journey end ;  
All helplessness, all weakness, I  
On Thee alone for strength depend."

#### THE APPLICATION.

We need to hold communion with God "alone." Precious and important as social worship is, it can never take the place of the closet. Nay more ; social worship itself is but a lifeless form to the man who lives in the neglect of secret prayer. In the solitude of the closet, when the door is shut, we attain to a true sense of our weakness ; and yet this is not that crushing and terrible feeling that seizes the man, who after having long battled in self reliance, finds that in the very crisis of the life-battle his arm has failed. The praying soul is alone ; and yet not alone, for his God is with him. He needs more than an arm of flesh to lean upon, but in God he hath strength. In communion with God he receives, out of the Divine fulness, grace for grace and strength for strength. Such weakness is real strength. All Scripture and experience join in assuring us that in order to our work and warfare, in order to the vigour and enjoyment of the Christian life, it is indispensable that we be much in secret prayer.

Let us not be discouraged when prayer is not immediately answered. Sometimes we are left to struggle in the dark, in silence and alone. Intellectual difficulties press upon us for solution—the windows of the soul are darkened—our souls are athirst for God, yet depression unaccountable and irresistible presses upon our spirits. We know and believe that there is a sun ; but it is behind a cloud so thick and impenetrable that no single ray reaches us, and dark cold