

with the serpent's poisonous breath. Since then God has spoken to man through the mediation of angels, celestial and terrestrial; by prophets in times of old; and in later ages by his Son. The stipulated signs of human thought are the stipulated signs of all divine ideas suggested to man. God now speaks to us in his written word, and we speak to him in our prayers. Thus we have communion with God through his Holy Spirit which is imparted to us. If we listen to God when he speaks (for he speaks first as it becomes him) he promises to listen to us. But if we hear not him, he hears not us. What an honor to be admitted into the audience of the Almighty Father upon such gracious terms! We hear the recorded words of God spoken by him through angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, his own Son; and thus having given our ears for a while to the voice of God, we lift up our voice. We utter our adorations, confessions, thanksgivings, petitions, and our unconditional submission to the will, authority, wisdom and goodness, mercy and love of him "who is, and was, and evermore shall be!" Thus our spirits ascend to the heavens and commune with God. This is the delightful fellowship which the *christian* indeed has with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; "praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit;" in the closet, by the way, in the field, morning, noon, evening, he prays "without ceasing."

"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord! In the morning will I direct my prayer to thee, and will look up." "In the morning shall my prayer anticipate thee." "As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice." "Seven times a-day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments." "His praise shall be continually in my mouth." "By Jesus let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually." Thus speak the saints of both Testaments.

Men may talk about religion, about sound doctrine, about ordinances, about institutions, about every thing present and future; but without this communion with God, this habitual devotion of mind, these constant aspirations, ejaculations, and soarings to the throne of mercy and favor, man is unfit for heaven, and unworthy of the christian profession. A zealot he may be, orthodox in doctrine, moral in demeanor; but he wants the life and power of christianity. Meditation on what God has spoken to us, and the outpourings of our spirit to him is to the moral man what free respiration in a pure atmosphere is to the physical man—life, health, vigor, beauty.

These musings remind me of a devotional reading of the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which was heard from the closet of an Israelite indeed, reported by a brother who dated his conversion from it. As a specimen which illustrates the above remarks we shall transcribe it from our pocket-book of memoranda. He read from the common version, and mingled his readings with the following ejaculations:—

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." [Yes, Lord Jesus, it is most reasonable that I give myself to thee; not my body only, but my soul; for hadst thou not made thy soul an offering for my sins and given thyself for me, I had sacrificed myself to my lusts and sold myself for vanity. My body,