

# CHRISTIAN BANNER.

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."  
"This is love, that we walk after his commandments."

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## ESSAY ON PRAYER.

Amongst the numerous and greatly diversified evidences, internal and external, of an early and direct communication from God to man found in the world as well as in the Bible, prayer occupies a broad and a lofty place. Man's speaking to God is, to my mind, a demonstration that God had first spoken to man. No human being ever spoke who was not first spoken to. That God first spoke to Adam is just as certain as that Adam spoke to Eve, or as certain as their children spoke to one another, and that since they continue to speak.

But there is more in prayer than speaking to God. There is more in prayer than a simple recognition of the divine existence. This, alone is, indeed, a great point; but it is subordinate to another point of greater value to us. It implies a knowledge of the attributes of God. It indicates on the part of him that calls upon God, that he has been taught that the being whom he addresses is an omnipresent God—that wherever he is, God is—and, more than this, that God hears the voice of man; not merely the vehement, impassioned, and loud appeal, but the almost inaudible whisper of a contrite, fainting, dying heart. Nay, that God reads what man himself cannot read—the superscription upon his own groanings, his inarticulate aspirations and desires. Oh! what language, what dialect of man, can express the eloquence of a sigh, a groan, a breathing of the human soul pleading, wrestling, prevailing with God.

Prayer, therefore, implies much more than we have yet expressed, nay, much more than we can express. It implies, not only that God hears our (to human ears) inaudible whispers, but that he reads what we ourselves cannot read—the language of our agonies and unutterable sighs and emotions. What a consolation to those who