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No. I.

ART. I.—*Are James the son of Alphæus and James the brother of the Lord identical?*

IN approaching, not without diffidence and hesitation, this difficult and interesting question, the author desires to occupy the position of an inquirer after truth, and not to speak *ex cathedra*. He proposes calmly, and without any *a priori* leaning to either side of the question, to consider the arguments, and sift the evidence produced on either side; and after due regard has been paid to the golden rule of all discussion, "*audiatur et altera pars*," to state the conclusion which his investigations have led him to reach.

The disentanglement of the question will probably be much facilitated by adhering to the literal nomenclature of the Greek, because doubtless much of the existing confusion is due to the departure from this rule.

The following table of all the persons bearing the name of Ἰάκωβος, mentioned in the New Testament, will be found convenient for reference:

1. Ἰακώβ, the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus. Matt. i. 15, 16.
2. Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου, Matt. iv. 21, x. 2, xvii. 1, xx. 20, 21, xxvi. 37; Mark iii. 17, v. 37; Luke v. 10, ix. 54;

ries, our presbyteries or classes, our particular and general assemblies or synods—these correspond to the graduated steps of government and authority in the individual States. If a federal congress over all gave unity and strength to our nation, and caused symmetry and power to spring out of political chaos, why should not a similar arrangement do as much, with the blessing of God, for the Presbyterian (*i. e.*, republican) church of Christ?

Here we leave our suggestions to the consideration of those who love our Lord and his cause.

ART. III.—*The Nature and Ends of Prayer.*

IN its own nature, that exercise which is commonly designated by the comprehensive name of *prayer*, is the highest privilege to which a creature can aspire, or of which creatures can conceive. The angels stand before the throne of Jehovah in veiled adoration and praise; and wait in listening readiness to obey his mandates of goodness and kindness, of mercy or of wrath. But we have no reason to imagine that they are admitted to enter into converse with God—to engage with him in a confidential interchange of thought, sentiment, and affection. Not to them, but to man it peculiarly belongs to enjoy the communion and fellowship of the Father of lights, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of holiness. 1 John i. 3; 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

The stated form in which this fellowship finds expression and exercise is prayer, which is defined in our Catechism to be “an offering of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.” More largely, the word is used to comprehend not only our petitions, confessions, and thanksgivings, but also those praises of God’s majesty and glory, which nearness of access to his presence always suggests. It is in this wider sense that we shall now view it.

When we come to analyze, and examine in detail, the particulars involved in prayer, they at once present themselves in aspects perplexing, and apparently absurd and contradictory to the carnal mind, and the true significance of which is not always fully appreciated by the child of God, even though familiar with the closet.

It is a telling to God of our necessities and wants—all which he knows already; so that it cannot be designed to instruct or inform him.

It is a pressing him with arguments drawn from our interests and concerns, therein comprehending our most trivial, as well as our greatest affairs—"in *everything* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, letting our requests be made known unto God." Phil. iv. 6. But all these, the greatest as well as the least, are utterly insignificant, as compared with his greatness, and the vast affairs of his kingdom; so that it cannot be designed to influence him, by virtue of the weight and importance of the matters involved.

It is a pleading with Him as to the orderings of his providence. And yet the design cannot be to induce any change in his plans, any modification of his purpose for the future; for, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts xv. 18. And "he is in one mind, and who can turn him?" Job xxiii. 13.

We are enjoined to be importunate and persevering; and yet this cannot be with any expectation to weary the infinite and almighty One to acquiescence in our wishes.

Where two or three agree touching anything which they ask, they have special assurances of hearing and answer; and even in the solitary closet, the union and fellowship in prayer of all saints is to be recognized and employed in the argument and appeal, "Our Father." Yet this cannot be because the combined strength of many, or all mortals, is more adequate to overcome and mould the purpose and will of God into harmony with our wishes.

In acceptable prayer is included a confession of our sins. And the assurance is given, that "he that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Prov. xxviii. 13. And yet, manifestly,

confession makes no compensation for sin; nor does it give any information to the justice of God, in order to its satisfaction, since the books of remembrance already contain full record of all.

This exercise involves thanksgiving and praise to God; and yet it is manifest that neither do our thanks compensate for God's goodness, nor our praises exalt his essential majesty or increase his blessedness.

To what purpose then is prayer? What is the object accomplished in the fulfilment of this duty and embrace of this privilege? In one word,—*Prayer is an act of communion with God, so ordered as to provide very special and powerful incentives to indulgence therein, in the varied and unspeakable blessings which are bestowed upon us through the channel of this exercise.*

Man, in his creation, was designed and endowed to be, in a very peculiar and exalted sense, the friend and fellow of God. Of this, a remarkable testimony is given by the Son, the Wisdom of God, in the book of Proverbs, viii. 29—32. “When he gave to the sea his decree, that the water should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth; then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children.” To this end it was that man was originally endowed with the image and likeness of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; a knowledge consisting not merely in intellectual apprehension of the truth respecting God's attributes and perfections; but in a competence for, and enjoyment of, personal acquaintance and converse with God; and a righteousness and holiness involving the outgoings of love and trust toward God, his attributes and his law, as revealed to the understanding in his works, his words, and the communings and teachings of his Spirit.

The fall was an apostasy from that divine fellowship to which man was thus ordained, in his creation; an apostasy which was signalized by actual bodily flight from the presence of God, and the vain attempt to hide from him, among the trees of the

garden. Henceforth, men "did not like to retain God in their knowledge." For this reason they have "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Rom. i. 23, 23. Henceforth, "the wicked,"—a name too truly including by nature the entire race—"the wicked, through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts." Psal. x. 4. To such a pass of alienation has he come, that the apostate affections give form to the atheist's creed, and the fool says, in his heart, "There is no God." Psal. xiv. 1. Thus, the withdrawal from personal converse and communion with God, and loss of that knowledge of him which flows from such intercourse of the heart, has resulted in a corresponding perversion of the understanding, and departure from all just and true conceptions respecting God and our relations to him. The result is, that darkness has covered the world, and gross darkness the people; that darkness the reverse of which is "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God."

From man's alienation from God results a correspondent enmity against his fellow-men. The one law of love, which alike bound man to his Maker and to his fellows, had the principle of all its activities in the attractive power of the Divine perfections; and that power being lost, love lost its control, and men became "hateful and hating one another," by virtue of being "haters of God."

With regard to the condition of man, as thus lost alike to divine and human fellowship and love, it was that Christ came to restore us to the blessed communion of God, and charity to each other. He came to declare the Father by that testimony of his Word which dispels the intellectual darkness of the world respecting God; and to bring men to the Father by the illuminating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, taking the things of Christ—all that the Father hath—and showing them unto us; drawing the heart out after God in ardour of love, and zealous obedience; and coming—the Father and Son, by the Spirit—and dwelling in the heart as abiding guests. John xiv. 21—26.

It is in view of these things, that our Saviour, having un-

folded to his disciples, at the table of the Supper, the nature and results of the union and communion of believers with the Father and Son, in a discourse recorded in the Gospel of John, (xiv—xvi.), afterwards, in a most wonderful prayer on the same theme, defines the nature of salvation, in those remarkable words; “And this is life eternal, that they might *know* thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” John xvii. 3. Of that last discourse and prayer, thus reported to us by the beloved disciple, John the divine, the impress may be traced in every line of his General Epistle, in which he expatiates upon this same theme—“That,” says he, “which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that our joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John i. 3—7. Of this union and fellowship of believers with God and each other, thus testified by John, he reports yet more striking expressions from the prayer of Jesus. “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” (ver. 11.) “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John xvii. 21—23. Thus does our Saviour intimate his own person to be at once a singular exemplar—“as thou Father art in me, and I in thee,” and the means, “I in them,” of the union and communion of God and his people. In the person of Christ, an actual personal unity is established between the second person of the Trinity and the child of Mary; between the Son of God and the Son of man.

And through him in whom God and man are thus united, and through him alone, can man ever again recover the fellowship of God. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." John xiv. 6. Thus does God, by the very person which he has given to his Son, signalize his own wonderful design to exalt, honour and bless man above every other creature, by admitting him to his own communion and friendship, making him a son and heir; and thus placing him in a position of dignity and privilege far above that which Adam by transgression lost.

The Holy Spirit is the efficient cause of the intimacy thus implied, alike as, dwelling in Christ the Head and believers the members, he engrafts them into him; and as, in them, he abides as the Spirit of adoption, and of grace and supplications. As the Spirit of the Son, he excites in us feelings of filial love and confidence, and induces us to adopt the cry, "Abba, Father;" bearing witness with our spirits that we are children of God. And as the Spirit of grace and supplications he "helpeth our infirmities," "making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

But, even in the children of God, the flesh, lusting against the Spirit, indisposes them to the intimacy and fellowship thus implied; so incongruous as it is to their native attitude of apostasy and alienation. Not only so, but the blindness and darkness induced by the fall disqualify them natively for communings with God upon such themes as are the proper and ultimate subjects of such communion; the great things of his grace and glory, since a common sphere of knowledge is essential to intercommunion of intellect or affection.

It is in view of these aspects of our lost and helpless condition that God has graciously appointed the ordinance of prayer, or supplication for needed mercies and blessings; the first and lowest degree of divine communion, and stepping-stone to all the rest; to thanksgiving, to praise and adoration. In this exercise, Jehovah bows his infinite intelligence to the narrow capacity of the feeblest Christian, by accepting, as the subject of converse, the most trivial concern of self which occupies the thoughts and arouses the emotions of that Christian's heart. He uses it as the means to constrain the alien nature, and attract the child of grace into his presence and converse,

by pressing him with the burden of necessities and wants, relief from which is held out to him, to be obtained at the throne of grace in answer to prayer. Thus, by the divine wisdom and goodness, the lowest and narrowest principle of our nature, selfishness, is made auxiliary to the highest ends of our sanctification and God's glory; as, by appeal to it, we are persuaded to draw near unto God and stand waiting and looking to his mercy-seat.

He who could have relieved his people at once and for ever from every form of trouble and from every experience of want, on the contrary, leaves them to a continual wrestling with tribulation and sorrow; assuring them at the outset of their course, "In this world ye shall have tribulation;" and verifying to them that declaration, to life's close. And whilst he holds in his power abundant supply for all wants and deliverance or consolation from all troubles, his hand is restrained and his blessings withheld. The wants could as easily have been satisfied, out of infinite fulness, at once, and without prayer; yet has he suspended his succors upon the condition, "Ask, and it shall be given you." Why is this? Because God delights in our unhappiness? or, because he stands upon the dignity of being asked, before he will bestow? Nay, verily. But, thus, our necessities are made the means of compelling us to turn away from the world, to the presence of God, and to engage in converse with him. We draw near before him, and tell the story of our burdened hearts, and pour out our sorrows in his ear. We ask deliverance, and it is received. We seek supplies, and they are granted. Thus arises the occasion and the emotion of thanksgivings poured forth from grateful hearts. As thus we frequent the Divine presence, and, as petitioners, grow familiar there, all the Divine perfections are gradually discovered to our view. His infinite power, his boundless goodness, his unspeakable condescension, his fathomless love, his universal providence, his spotless holiness and perfect justice, unfold themselves to our wondering view, inspiring us with admiring joy, and impelling us to acts of grateful praise and reverent adoration.

Nor, in all this, is the believer alone, in giving expression to his desires and feelings, his prayers and praises. That gracious

One who has brought him thus nigh, in order to teach him to converse with God, delights to respond to these utterances, which his own Spirit gives, in testimonies of reciprocal love and grace, in disclosures to the soul of his own hidden beauties and glories, and in promises suited to each several case. The Spirit taking the things of Christ, and showing them to the believer, selects from the promises and testimonies of God such as are appropriate to each particular case, and seals them as God's own special testimony to that soul. Thus is a mutual communion and fellowship with the Father and his Son established; that communion which, perfected and perpetuated in heaven, is the source of all its joys, and the highest of all its honours.

In this view we have the key to all the phenomena of prayer. What matters it, that in thus bringing our wants before God, we do not instruct him; since already he knows them all! It is sufficient, that the theme is one upon which we can talk intelligently, and that upon it we may be persuaded to commune with God. What cares the loving parent, how trite or trivial the topic upon which his child addresses him, so long as it inspires the stammering efforts of the young prattler, and gives occasion for the interchange of thought and affection between parent and child. How common upon parents' lips, the expression, "Ask me, ask me pretty, and you shall have it." So, a gracious God, delighting to hear the faltering accents of filial love and confidence addressing his fatherly ear, says to his children, "Ask, and it shall be given you."

So too, with respect to our interests being too insignificant to deserve the notice of God. True, none of our affairs are of a dignity which may, on that score, claim his attention. But the one consideration which controls the case, is, the degree in which the subject is important and interesting to us. No matter how trivial the subject may be, in itself, if it sustains such relations to us as to render it of moment to our welfare and happiness; if it have a power to arouse our intellectual faculties and stir our affections, and to direct them toward God, in communications of confidence and in expectation and hope; in it are fulfilled the best designs of prayer, and the child of God may with confidence bring it to the notice of the Father's ear. And, undoubtedly, it is through a too common failure of just

and practical conceptions on this point, that prayer is to so large an extent a mere futile and barren exercise of the intellect and the imagination. In entering upon that exercise, we too little consult our own conscious necessities, and the real wishes and longings of our own hearts; but seek rather to find themes and a style sufficiently dignified for the ear of God. Than such orations—however high the sentiments, however lofty the theme or worthy the phrases—one cry of earnest desire gushing importunately toward God's throne, from a trusting heart, however rude the speech or trivial the subject, has infinitely more of true dignity, and assured acceptance with God. Let no child of faith imagine that anything can interest or concern him, respecting which the Father's ear is not ready to listen, and the Father's love does not invite him to speak.

Again, the Divine purpose in enjoining on us importunity and perseverance in prayer, is manifest in the light of the principles above stated. The answer is not delayed because of reluctance, and the object of importunity is not to weary out the Divine will. But the design of God, in this feature of his dealings, is to keep us in attendance at the mercy-seat, that we may grow familiar there, and that we may acquire the habit, not merely of occasional coming into the Divine presence and communication with the Father of spirits; but of a continuous waiting before him, with reverent confidence pleading and expostulating with him respecting the delaying kindness; watching his countenance for the tokens of gracious hearing and answer, and thus acquiring and enjoying a growing privilege and freedom of communion with the hearer of prayer.

So too of united prayer. In it the complete and triumphant power of Christ's salvation is doubly displayed, in the restored fellowship of the redeemed with God, and with each other. As the apostasy of man from God involved therein alienation from his fellow-men, so the plan of redemption not only provided for reëstablished communion with God, but for renewed fellowship among men. These two results of his salvation the Redeemer very emphatically identifies together, and sets forth as the evidence and pledge to the world of his own mission and the Father's love to the redeemed. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are

one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John xvii. 22, 23. Of this communion of believers with each other and fellowship with God, union and agreement in prayer is the most signal evidence and expression; as therein is exhibited not only harmony, fellowship and union of affection and sentiment with each other, but as that harmony has respect to search after and communion with Him, from whom they are, by nature, so utterly estranged.

Not only so, but this united approach to the throne of grace is a most powerful means of cherishing and invigorating the unity of the Spirit, of which it is so emphatic an expression. Coming together into the presence of one God and Father of all, through one Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour of all, by the one Spirit of holiness and grace—confessing the same sins, lamenting the same infirmities, realizing the same necessities, pressing the same requests, and cherishing the same expectations and hopes—they are induced thus to appreciate the reality of the tie by which they are one, to cherish the intimacy proper to that unity, and to draw toward each other in the bonds of mutual tenderness, and exercises of mutual kindness and sympathy. Thus are they knit together in love and communion with each other and with God; and to this intent is it that united prayer is designed.

As this agreement of believers in prayer is the highest demonstration of restored fellowship in both these directions, so it is the best evidence of the presence and agency within them of the Spirit of God, by whose power alone such unity of sentiment, such desire after God, and concurrent approach to him could ever be induced. Thus is united prayer assured of acceptance and answer, by a double argument; on the one hand, as the Divine faithfulness is pledged in this way to reward the union which thus so remarkably exhibits and accomplishes the triumph of his grace; and, on the other, as that Spirit by whom it is wrought is he who helpeth our infirmities in prayer, and maketh intercession for us according to the will of God, inditing petitions which God's will that dictates them will answer.

Another of the circumstances of prayer which finds its solution in the cherishing of divine communion, is the fact that all the promises of answer are addressed to faith: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, *believing*, ye shall receive." Matt. xxi. 22. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe* that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark xi. 24. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him *ask in faith*, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." James i. 5—7. "The *prayer of faith* shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." James v. 15. The essential ground of faith is testimony; and that class of testimonies upon which, in effectual prayer, faith lays hold, is the promises, not merely as they stand recorded in the word, nor as they may be appealed to by the imagination, but as the Spirit selects them and brings them home to the heart with applying power, taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." Psal. xxv. 14. And it is in such intercommunications as these, in which the soul's pleas are met by secret testimonies to the heart of the Divine presence and love, and pledges of blessings according to the need, that the true communion of the closet consists. He who prays without faith, babbles in God's presence, without listening for the answer. He has failed to reflect that to such as will hear, God is always ready to speak; that, to those who ask, he is ever ready to respond. He goes away unblessed, and shall receive no good thing of God, because he has declined communion, not even listening to the promises which God was ready to utter. He has attempted to convert the banqueting-house of love into a mere almshouse of beggars.

Believing prayer, then, implies, not only an exhibition of our pleas before the throne of God, but a heartfelt sense of God's presence, in so doing; and, predicated thereupon, a looking and waiting, not merely to receive the blessing sought, but to hear the voice of God responding to us; an acceptance of the com-

munications thus received, in a spirit of trustful confidence; and a consequent patient waiting until the desired mercy is obtained. "I waited patiently for the Lord," says the Psalmist, "and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." Psal. xl. 1, 2. But since faith is not of ourselves, but the gift of God, a fruit of the Spirit, and the other exercises which accompany it in prayer are of like origin, the necessity of the aid of that blessed agent, in order to a right performance of this duty, is apparent. Hence that testimony of Paul, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Rom. viii. 26, 27. Thus the efficacy of prayer is at last dependent upon the presence and guidance of that Spirit of God and of Christ whose communion and fellowship is the enjoyment of every believer.

Here, it is necessary to present an additional consideration, which must enter into any just understanding of those promises which have respect to effectual prayer, the prayer of faith. It is, that, in this exercise, we seldom so yield ourselves to the leadings of the Spirit as to constitute him the sole author of the affections realized and the petitions presented at the throne of grace. Usually, our own carnal understandings, imaginations, and feelings interpose to such a degree as to modify essentially the whole character of the exercise, and leave it very partially under the control of the Spirit. Sometimes, no doubt, it occurs that we neither seek nor receive any assistance whatever from the Spirit, as to the frame-work and formal matter of our petitions, and yet enjoy a measure of his presence and influence, inducing emotions and exciting groanings which are unuttered, but heard before the throne, while our speeches, though never so eloquent, are altogether empty and vain. But, inasmuch as we know not what we should pray for as we ought; inasmuch as the Spirit only knoweth the will of God, and can therefore make intercession according thereto; inasmuch as he only can

truly impart and interpret to the soul the divine promises which respond to such intercessions, and create faith in those promises; it is manifest that true faith, to which the assurances of answer are given, can only characterize any petition in so far as, whether in matter or spirit, it is dictated by the Holy Ghost. In so far as it is of him it accords with God's will, and the answer is sure. In so far as it is of ourselves it must be devoid of true faith.

How entirely in harmony with this whole conception of prayer is the requirement that our supplications be in the name of Christ, it is scarcely necessary to show. On this point, nothing could be more appropriate than the very language in which Jesus directs us thus to use his name: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." John xvi. 23—28. In fact, a coming into God's presence, in the name of him who is God's own fellow, is of itself a claim to fellowship with him—a claim which, as Jesus here testifies, is most acceptable to God, since it announces our love to him who is the Father's first beloved, and who came out from him.

Proportionate to the nature of prayer, as here exhibited, are its rewards. First among these is the reception of the blessings which are sought at the hand of God. "Whatsoever ye shall ask believing, ye shall receive." "If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it." Whenever a penitent sinner comes to the mercy-seat, and in the name of Christ, with true faith, presents his petition, and with patient perseverance presses his suit and awaits the blessing, the promise may seem to be delayed, but it will come, and will not tarry. It is, indeed, sometimes attempted to explain away the express and specific language of

the many promises on this subject, which have been already exemplified in this discussion; and to interpret them as implying no more than the assurance that the believing suppliant shall be blessed, in some way or other, though perhaps not in the particular which he desires and expects. It is, no doubt, often true, that while the heart, moved by the Spirit, is yearning after one thing, the lips, guided by the carnal will, are pleading for something altogether different. The manner of this phenomenon of grace we have already noticed, and indicated that the extent to which the petition is dictated by the Spirit, and, therefore, embraced by a true faith, is that which the promise comprehends. That, to this full extent, it is sure to the believer, results, not only from the express and unambiguous language of the promises, but from several other considerations which are equally clear and conclusive.

It results from the nature and objects of prayer. Its design being to bring us into the Divine presence, in order to intercommunion there—the full intent is never accomplished until the suppliant, persuaded by the Spirit to come to the throne of grace, and inspired by him with such desires as will be acceptable there—has presented his plea, received a response from the mouth of God, and accepted it with believing joy. If the communion have been real, the faith thus induced rests on the truth of God; and to suppose that to fail were blasphemous. Further, the design of suspending God's mercies upon the condition of prayer, being to persuade our alien nature to come nigh to God, under the impulse of favours expected in answer to our requests—it is evident that unless we may expect the very favour, the desire for which has brought us there, the whole argument and encouragement utterly fails.

To the same conclusion, is the fact that believing prayer is dictated by the Spirit. It can neither be imagined that he is ignorant of the will of God, nor that he will delude the subjects of his guidance by persuading them to expect what God will not grant.

The history of the Son of God, when on earth, in his dealings with those who sought his grace, confirms the view here taken. He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and is not only the very image of the Father, but

is now enthroned by the Father as Head over all things, Lord of providence, and administrator of the Father's kingdom, so that from his immediate hand are we to look for the answers to prayer and the supply of our wants. But when he was upon earth, in the days of his flesh, he never failed to grant to one believing suppliant the petition which he asked. Then, as now, he required faith in the applicant, as a condition of his favour. Then, as now, he sometimes delayed an answer, in order to try and strengthen faith and perseverance. But no suppliant who came in faith went away disappointed. Always they received, not only the better blessings of saving grace, but also the specific favour for which they sought his presence. And so must it be now, as then, with him who changes not.

Here, let it not be supposed that the prayer of faith, which is thus so assured of acceptance, has in its nature anything occult or mysterious, or so difficult as to be necessarily of rare attainment, and beyond the ordinary reach of common Christians. In so far as any prayer is acceptable with God, it is of this nature; and in so far as any child of God seeks and cherishes and yields to the guidance of the Spirit in the closet, will he grow in grace and effectual prayer. To no petition does God listen with more favour than to that which asks for the Holy Spirit. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke xi. 11—13. And never is that blessed Spirit more congenially engaged, than when leading the children of God into the Father's presence, and teaching them how there to plead with boldness and efficacy, for all things whatsoever they need. He, then, that would be effectual in prayer, let him watch in the closet against his own wisdom and self-confidence, and strive continually to commit himself to the guidance of the Comforter.

Need we say that these views give no just occasion to a carnal enthusiasm? Not those who, out of their own heads, frame their petitions, and, out of their own hearts, believe that they shall

have what they ask—not they shall receive any good thing of God. Such may become blind enthusiasts, deceiving and being deceived. But this snare is to be avoided, not by denying or disparaging the grace of God, but by a constant jealousy of self, making sure that the grace of God is in us, and abiding steadfastly in that grace.

The immediate design and effect of the communings to which the closet invites us, is the cultivation within us of the Divine knowledge and love. Whilst by means of minor blessings we are enticed into the presence-chamber, and are brought into communion with the Father of spirits, it is in order to bestow upon us better things—to reveal to us the perfections of Jehovah. Each act of approach, on our part, is predicated upon knowledge already attained, and is met by further communications of knowledge, as every word of God thus received conveys its own peculiar revelation to the soul, thus fulfilling the request, in which every child of grace joins with Moses—impelled thereto, as was he, by partial visions already enjoyed: “I beseech thee, show me thy glory.”

Two results, in succession, follow from this. In the higher contemplations thus set before them, and the lofty communings which are associated therewith, the disciples of Christ attain to a superiority over all earth's cares and troubles, and acquire that peace of God which passeth all understanding, filling their hearts and minds through Jesus Christ, and a hope immovable and full of glory. And going on from strength to strength, they are gradually sanctified and fitted for heaven. Of this result, whilst the Holy Spirit is the efficient agent, the communion and vision of God are the immediate cause. “We love him because he first loved us.” Each testimony of Divine love received by the soul, elicits emotions of responsive love. Each vision of God's holiness and glory inspires admiration of those perfections, and abhorrence of our own depravity and vileness, and so induces conformity to the Divine likeness. Thus the radiance of God's perfections is enstamped upon the soul, and his people “with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. iii. 18), until, by earth's communings, gradually educated for heaven, they

at length, perfected in holiness, are translated to glory, there to see as they are seen, and to know, even as also they are known—the wailing plaints and prayers of earth giving place to the joyous and adoring songs of the skies; and its distant and interrupted vision and fellowship exchanged for a home in the bosom of God.

We close with some suggestions for guidance in prayer, deduced from the general principles here presented.

1. In engaging in prayer, the mind should be occupied and controlled by a clearly defined desire and expectation of enjoying a mutual communion with God. The object is not, from a distance, to address the throne, but to draw near, and enter sensibly into the Divine presence; and whilst presenting our petitions and uttering our confessions, thanks, and praises, in each to look for, expect, and await a Divine response, imparted at once by the Comforter, on the Father's behalf. To this intent it is well that, at times, our own utterances should be entirely suspended, and the mind, unemployed in conceiving and uttering speech, be left entirely free to hear: "Commune with thine own heart, and be still." And, in such exercises, let it not be supposed that nothing is gained, because no more may be realized than a solemn awe in God's presence. Not only is that of itself an experience of the highest value, to be assiduously cherished, but it is furthermore undoubtedly true, that to the soul thus adoring before God's throne, the Holy Spirit, which helpeth our infirmities by intercessions and groanings that cannot be uttered, may and does bestow communications of grace to the spirit, whilst the understanding is unfruitful. Compare Rom. viii. 26, with 1 Cor. xiv. 14, and throughout the chapter.

2. It was not casually that, in instructing the disciples how to pray, the first words which our Saviour taught them to utter were the fraternal, filial cry, "Our Father"—recognizing in those two words the brotherhood of all saints, the sympathy of all the members in the one body, their common interest at the throne of grace, the paternal love and tenderness of God, and the filial confidence and fellowship thereby induced. Such are the feelings which Jesus designed to inculcate by the direction—"After this manner pray ye." Such the feelings which

should be diligently cherished and brought into exercise in all our approaches to the mercy-seat. If our Father, then may we come with confidence and boldness; then may we be assured that not only will he hear, but respond and bless.

3. The same general principles apply to the use of the name of Christ. Whilst some doubtless use that name as a mere form adapted to round off the closing period, and others as a sort of word of incantation, invested with some secret mystic power, and whilst the children of God too often seem to view it in no higher light than as a plea of justice satisfied for sin; a glance at the language of our Saviour on the subject, will evince that it has a much higher design. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it." John xiv. 13, 14. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. . . . And I say not that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." John xvi. 24—27. The name of Christ is the plea of love. It involves indeed a claim of justice satisfied, but to the Son, himself, upon the throne, it urges the Father's glory, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son," as well as the Son's own love to his redeemed. And to the Father, it is the plea of our love to his dear Son. Thus, its spirit and purpose is love; and its design is not a mere formal utterance of the name at the close of prayer, but faith and love to him, and to the Father in him, pervading it all. As we come, with the cry, our Father, the first words we utter, so should we come with the faith in Christ, and consequent union with him, which that cry implies. He who calls us to the fellowship of heaven, thus, in the God-man, reveals the way.

4. In order to the freest and highest enjoyment of the privilege of the mercy-seat, it is necessary that our views and wishes be in all respects conformed to those of God. To this end, the word of God is to be studied, with the constant object of moulding our thoughts and affections in accordance therewith; and in all our thoughts and meditations it should be our endeavour to strive to view things, not from the low and grovelling

stand-point of our carnal aims and interests, but from that of the Divine honour and glory, and the vast dimensions of God's kingdom, and the depth and wisdom of his counsels.

5. That importunity and perseverance to which a gracious answer is pledged, does not consist in an occasional and impetuous urging of our plea at the mercy-seat, but in a calm, earnest, and persistent pressing of it, with humble consciousness and confession of unworthiness, filial confidence in God's infinite grace and love, and a confiding expectation of the blessing, looking and patiently waiting for it. The design of our being invited to exercise perseverance, being to induce us to keep near the mercy-seat, so as to learn the faithfulness and love of God, and to engage in communion with him, it is evident that he who most fully and heartily enters thus into the spirit of the exercise will soonest receive his request; whilst an occasional and impatient cry—since it implies unsubmitiveness under God's hand, distrust of his goodness and truth, and therefore ignorance of his true character, by reason of estrangement from his presence—precludes the blessing, the bestowal of which in such circumstances would be an encouragement to continuance in such a state of distance and ignorance.

6. Above all else, as being the means essential to all, is the aid of the Spirit to be sought, and his guidance followed with implicit acquiescence. How often do we grieve that agent of Divine grace, when present, and offering his aid, by listening to the suggestions of our own grovelling understandings and dictates of our carnal wills, rather than give heed to his invitations, which are calling us to the banquetting-house under the banner of perfect love. Would we offer acceptable petitions? They must be dictated by "the Spirit of grace and supplications." Would we conform them to the will and purpose of God? It is the Spirit that "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Would we therein experience the highest joys, and antepasts of heaven itself? They are found in "the communion of the Holy Ghost." The secret mystery of prayer, therefore, is to watch and set our sails so as to catch the softest breathing of the Spirit, and guide our bark thereby to the bosom of infinite Love;—a secret, this, which none but he himself can teach. But "if ye being parents

know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Ask, then, and it shall be given you.

How wonderful the condescension, grace, and wisdom of our God, who employs such means and uses such assiduities to win us back from our apostasy from him, and persuade us to return to the communings of his heart and the bosom of his love; making his eternal Son, in his two natures, the exemplar and bond of union, and the way, and his Spirit the guide, into his presence, the inspirer of our utterances there, and interpreter to us of the Father's words of grace, accepting our low concerns as the theme of converse; and, with all the treasures of infinite power and goodness, adequate to every want and more than heart can conceive, held forth in his hands, suspends the bestowal of all on the one condition that we will talk with and believe in him as our Friend! Ask, believe, persevere, and ye shall receive.

ART. IV.—*Pennsylvania Archives*, Vol. 4. 1853.

A Chapter from "*The Monongahela of Old*," &c., by the Hon. JAMES VEECH, Pittsburgh, Pa. 1857.

ONE hundred years ago, this last autumn, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon 'commenced to run from East to West the parallel of latitude which forms the Southern boundary of Pennsylvania, and still bears their names, with so much celebrity. No line of demarcation, drawn by human survey, was ever so remarkable, in the geographical divisions of our globe. It is perfectly artificial. Neither desert, nor mountain, nor water, the three diversities of boundary which nature gives to States, can be found to guide or help its continuity; not even a circle of the sphere that geography would draw, without fractions, in one of its regular measures from the equator; and yet no other limit on earth was ever so conspicuous, in the