

Solitude Sweetened

by James Meikle, (1730-1799)

PRAYER

No sooner is the child born, than he breathes; no sooner is Paul converted, than, behold! he prays.

O incomparable privilege! to be allowed to pour our petitions into the ear of God, cast our cares upon him, plead the performance of the promise, and cast the burden of our sorrows and necessities over on his sympathy and all-sufficiency! The prayer of faith has won more numerous and more noble victories than all the mighty conquerors since war was taught among the nations. Prayer is the furbishing of all the other pieces of the spiritual armor, and as it were the master of all the graces. Prayer is the key of heaven; Elijah prayed, and it was locked; again he prayed, and it was opened. Prayer is the terror of hell, which will put up with anything but prayer. Prayer is the ambassador of the renewed soul—the trumpet of faith—the support of the weak—the employment of the expectant of glory—and the daily exercise of the Christian.

It is like a pulley that draws the soul up to heaven; and, like a golden pipe, plunges into that river that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and conveys the blessing down into the soul below. When Job prayed, God turned his captivity. When Jacob wrestled in prayer, he obtained the blessing. When Elijah and Solomon prayed, the fire fell and consumed the sacrifice. When Paul and Barnabas prayed and sang praises, the prison was shaken, the doors opened, and everyone's bands loosed. And while the church prayed for Peter, an angel set him at liberty. By all which it appears, that God will be inquired after by prayer, and will work wonders for the humble supplicants.

This is the time that God will talk with men in a special manner—the audience-hour of the great King, when the court of Heaven receives and answers the petitions of the saints. And many times have the souls of God's people been enlarged beyond measure, while they have, Jacob-like, been wrestling for the blessing, weeping and making supplication to God. Then Heaven has been pleased to pour in its joys in the soul, so fully, that they hardly could contain; their old bottles being like to burst asunder with the new wine of God.

Flowery expressions, and a fine style; a multitude of words, and many petitions; or anything that may seem the wisdom of man, more than the power of God—is not the prayer that shall be heard by Him, who regards one earnest wish, and sincere request, before all the oratory of the schools. We should search ourselves

before prayer, and know what sin is least subdued, what duty is most neglected, what grace is most decayed, that we may pray with understanding. Again, we should summon our attention in the time of prayer, that we may speak as to God; and we should look to God after prayer for an answer, and wait on him who is both able and willing to supply all our need, spiritual and temporal, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

(Taken from "Solitude Sweetened" by James Meikle)

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