

PRAYER AND PRAISE.

The employment of the two great families of earth and heaven, the Church militant and the Church triumphant, is *prayer* and *praise*. Prayer is the native breathings of the soul, quickened by the vivifying influence of the Divine Spirit, is the lisping of the child of grace, who, when grown to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, and borne on angel wings to that better home beyond, breaks forth into melodious and unceasing strains of praise.

Prayer is pre-eminently suited to our state here below, *praise* to the state of the saints above. Here we are vexed with sin and temptations, with wants and infirmities, therefore we ought to draw near to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need; but, in that house of many mansions, we shall be blessed with the removal of sin and temptations, of wants and infirmities. This corruption shall have put on incorruption, this mortal immortality; then, our soul shall go forth in praise and thanksgiving to the Three-One-God for His ineffable love to usward.

Here God gives all, but for His gifts He will be inquired of by the house of Israel that He may bestow them—hence prayer is now our duty; but there He has given all things, and for His gifts He will be acknowledged by all the heavenly host; hence praise then is our debt. Prayer is the soul pouring out itself to God in a state of trial, and praise is the soul pouring out itself to God in a state of triumph. Now, as our life is a life of trouble, a complication of calamities, and a scene of affliction, prayer is more properly our continual exercise; for “if any man is afflicted, let him pray,” but on high, as all is peace, perfection, purity and joy, praise is more properly the exercise of the redeemed—hence, the heavenly hosts surrounding the great white throne are said “not to rest day nor night” in praising Him who sits thereon forever. But, although praise is pre-eminently suited to the state of the redeemed, when the vision of the soul has been so enlarged as to comprehend all those glories which the natural eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, yet praise is not limited exclusively to the glorified state. Here below, while the soul is pent up in these earthly teguments, and the greatest knowledge is removed but a few degrees from ignorance, and we are weak, erring, sinful, afflicted creatures, we should pray without ceasing; but surely, praise, however imperfect, ought also to mingle with our every supplication or entreaty; praise for life, praise for temporal blessings innumerable, praise for spiritual blessings unfathomable. What soul, realizing even in a small degree what it has gained in Christ, will not, at least, morning, noon and evening, breathe forth from a grateful heart, praises to Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Praise, also, waits in Zion on the Hearer of prayer.