

## The Perpetuity of Prayer (2)

*“Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice”.* ( Psalm 141:2)

The petitions set forth in this prayer embrace the lot of all saints, their circumstances and, in them, the state of their hearts and minds. They reveal where we are spiritually, for they are the voice and affections of heart and soul. Since these are entreated to be set perpetually before the Lord, we do well to “pray for our prayers” that we may offer a pleasing incense before the Throne.

We should pray for God to undertake what we have failed to perform in respect to our *speech*, our mouth, our lips and our tongues. The unruly tongue, a hasty commitment, the enflamed outburst, imprudent words, gossip, and ill-advised, ill-willed criticism. We should be slow to defend ourselves with false denials of our failures. May we be delivered from an obsession with self-protection. So we pray for the Lord to set a guard over the mouth, a watch over the door of the lips, to preempt such evil speech and prayers with grace.

We should seek the deliverance of our fleshy hearts from the evil toward which they naturally inclined; that our desires should be sanctified, and our souls turned away from wicked works.

We need to pray that we be delivered from throwing our lots in with wicked men. They are appealing and ever recruiting. Let us not be thus unequally yoked, obliged and bound. Give me grace to refuse their enticements, that I be not seduced and defiled with their pleasantries, baits, bounties and bribes.

We ought to welcome the righteous as God’s instrument of His chastening rod of correction upon us. The timely rebuke of a brother or sister ought be received as the messenger of God’s love. Whoever God may employ to humble my pride and conceit is heaven’s gracious gift. *“Let not my head refuse it”* (vs.5). Our carnal minds would prefer the flattery and bribes of the wicked to the reproof and chastening of the righteous.

We must not mistakenly interpret our Lord’s injunctions to love our enemies to include a blessing on their evil. On the contrary we should pray against the wicked...especially if such wickedness would profit us at the expense of righteousness. The snare that overthrows my neighbor will entangle my foot on the morrow. Rather we should pray that these Hamans be hanged on their own gallows. All vengeance (righteous judgment) belongs to the Lord. We should pray that our hearts are content to leave that all to Him.

It will be reward and blessing enough if we escape safely, our righteous souls are prospered, and are enabled to glorify our blessed Savior in our mortal bodies all our days.

- C. M.