

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

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The Spirit of Prayer by Nathanael Vincent

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NATHANAEL VINCENT

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OF PRAYER**

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THE

SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

EPHESIANS VI. 18.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication
in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all per-
severance and supplication for all saints.

THE Apostle looking upon the Ephe-
sians as militant saints, and fighting,
not against flesh and blood, but against
principalities and the powers of darkness;
instructs them, towards the latter end
of this chapter, how they might become
more than conquerors. To this end he
tells them, first of all, where their strength
lay; they must "be strong in the Lord,

and in the power of his might," verse 10; and then gives them a complete armour, which being put on, and the several pieces of it skilfully used, the wiles of Satan will be frustrated, and themselves enabled to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

1. They must be girded about with the girdle of truth. Thy error Satan has great advantage; how many, like children, are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine! but a judgment rightly informed and well settled, that buys the truth and will by no means sell it, has a great influence upon a Christian's steadfastness and growth in grace.

2. They must have on the breast-plate of righteousness; they must be righteous in heart, righteous in sincerity. A conscience, purged from dead works, is a better defence than a wall of brass. Satan cannot so easily disquiet them that

are sincere, neither is he able to corrupt them; their holiness being true, sin is hated, the allurements unto sin are contemned, and God is followed hard after.

3. Their feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. They must be encouraged by that peace which the gospel publishes, to run the way of God's commandments; and that though those ways are never so difficult and unpleasant to flesh and blood, they must hold fast the profession of their faith, and depart from evil, and go in the path that is called holy; though by thus doing, they never-so-much expose, and make themselves a prey.

4. Above all, they must take the shield of faith, whereby they may quench the fiery darts of the wicked. Satan's temptations are darts; he does design our wounding, our pain, our death, in shooting of them: and these darts may well be

called fiery ; they are shot from hell, and a hell in the conscience they make, if they are not quenched ; but faith is a shield to repel and beat them back : Faith makes application of the righteousness and strength of Christ ; and by this means, not only former wounds are assuaged and healed, but the soul is more secured for the future.

5. The helmet of salvation must cover their heads in this day of battle with evil angels. A lively hope of salvation is very encouraging both unto patient continuance in well-doing, and also unto suffering for the sake of righteousness.

6. The Apostle tells them, that the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, must be made use of. If this word be understood, believed, thought on, loved, stood in awe of ; if it thus abide in us, we shall be strong, and overcome the evil one.

These are the pieces of the armour of God. But in this combat with the devil, is there not need of auxiliary forces? certainly there is a necessity of succour from heaven. The captain, therefore, of our salvation, must be looked unto, and divine aid continually implored and begged for. By prayer we have power with God, and power against our spiritual enemies. No wonder that the apostle enjoins "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." &c.

The text may be divided into these parts:

1. Here is a *duty commanded*, in the performance of which lies safety; and that is, *praying*.

2. The *extent of this duty*, it must be *always*, and it must be *with all prayer*.

3. The due qualifications of this duty, which are these following:

1st, It must be *in the Spirit*.