



Reformed Thoughts on Prayer and the Spiritual Life

Cor meum tibi offerre domine prompte et sincere,

**Unto you, Lord, I offer my heart,
promptly and sincerely.**

Personal seal of John Calvin

True prayer ought to be nothing else but a pure affection of our heart as it is about to draw near to God... to pour out our prayers.

Calvin's Catechism of 1538

Not only does he cleave to us by an indivisible bond of fellowship, but with a wonderful communion, day by day, he grows more and more into one body with us, until he becomes completely one with us.

The Institutes III.2.24

...ascending to a loftier height, let us seek the city of God, let us seek the temple, let us seek our home, let us seek our spouse. ...We are... in the heart of God.

The Institutes III.2.25

Let us therefore labor more to feel Christ living in us, than to discover the nature of that intercourse.

Calvin, *Commentary on Ephesians* 5.32

... the essentials of prayer are set in the mind and heart, or rather that prayer itself is properly an emotion of the heart within, which is poured out and laid open before God, the searcher of hearts.

The Institutes III.20.29

[Jesus] taught us to seek a retreat that would help us to descend into our heart with our whole thought and enter deeply within. He promises that God, whose temples our bodies ought to be, will be near to us in the affections of our hearts.

The Institutes III.20.29

Prayer is none other than an expanding of our hearts in the presence of God.

John Calvin in *Corpus Reformatorum*

It now remains to pour into the heart itself what the mind has absorbed. For the Word of God is not received by faith if it flits about in the top of the brain, but when it takes root in the depth of the heart that it may be an invincible defense to withstand and drive off all the stratagems of temptation.

The Institutes III.2.36

Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him in the gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body — in short, because he deigns to make us one with him.

The Institutes III.11.10



Thou being married to him who is God, in him art also one with God. ...And being thus united and married to him, his spirit flows into thy spirit, represents a Reformed mysticism at its best, passionately seeking union with Christ, knowing that such union is really a gift, but knowing also that it must be the goal of all waking activity.

Francis Rous, *The Mystical Marriage*

We are made holy not by the force of conscience, nor of moral motives, nor by acts of discipline, but by being united to Christ so as to become reconciled to God, and partakers of the Holy Ghost.

Charles Hodge,
The Way of Life and Selected Writings

Prayer is at the heart of worship.

Book of Order W-2.1001

Prayers may be spoken, sung, enacted, and offered in silence. Daily prayer affords a unique opportunity for silence and meditation in community.

Book of Order W-3.4003

What does it mean to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink his shed blood?

...It is to be so united more and more to his blessed body by the Holy Spirit dwelling both in Christ and in us that, although he is in heaven and we are on earth, we are nevertheless flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone...

Book of Confessions
Heidelberg Catechism 4.076

What is prayer?

Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Book of Confessions
The Larger Catechism 7.288

The life of Christian faith, life in Christ, involves being able to see what there is to be seen, to see beneath the surface of things, and even to see beyond what can be seen.

Growing in the Life of Christian Faith
201st General Assembly Report

...God desires our faithful discipleship in the world. It is our witness that God's Spirit meets, speaks to, and changes us both "out there" in the world, and "in here" in our prayer and worship.

Hungry Hearts, Hungry Minds
203rd General Assembly Report

One cannot be spiritual and live unjustly. Genuine spirituality cannot be had without paying the price of reconciliation with those who have something against us. It will work for justice in the world as an intrinsic part of its spiritual discipline.

Howard Rice, *Reformed Spirituality*

The practices of faith are not ultimately our own practices but rather habitations of the Spirit, in the midst of which we are invited to participate in the practices of God.

Craig Dykstra,
Growing in the Life of Faith

