

What is Prayer?

James Montgomery, SACRED POEMS AND HYMNS, 1854

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Utter'd or unexpress'd,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burthen of a sigh,
The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

It is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try,
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, "Behold he prays!"

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.

The saints in prayer appear as one
In word, and deed, and mind,
While with the Father and the Son
Sweet fellowship they find.

Nor prayer is made by man alone,
The Holy Spirit pleads,
Jesus, on the eternal throne,
For sinners intercedes.

O Thou by whom we come to God,
The life, the truth, the way!
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.