

## S E R M O N XVI.

ON THE INTERCESSION OF THE HOLY  
SPIRIT IN PRAYER.

ROMANS, Chap. viii. Ver. 26, 27.

*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth, what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.*

UPON reading these words to you, it may be naturally supposed that I am going to discourse upon that great and important duty, the ordinance of prayer: in the right discharge of which, believers enjoy much holy fellowship with the Lord, and at times, much of the divine presence. Perhaps, there is no child of God but finds himself, through the darkness and ignorance which beset him in the present state, more or less distressed and discouraged in his approaches to

the throne of grace. To pray aright, in faith, and in the Holy Ghost, is beyond all the power of nature. Prayer is the breath of the new-born soul, of the soul which is born of God; yea, it is the breathing of the Spirit of God which is in him. To assist your minds, and to lay before you the concern of the Spirit of Christ in prayer; to shew you how he helps the faints, and enables them to offer up their petitions with energy, and in a manner acceptable unto the Lord, is my end in view, and my design in proposing to treat upon the Scripture now before us. May the Lord be pleased most graciously to assist me in speaking, and you in hearing, that the whole may tend to our mutual profit and edification, and to his glory. From what I have premised you will observe, that I am not going to speak concerning prayer as a moral duty or act, binding upon all mankind, in which they do by it acknowledge their entire dependence upon the Lord for life, and breath, and all things; it becoming them, as rational creatures, to adore, admire, and praise JEHOVAH for all the bounties of his providence towards them: the neglect of this is their sin; and the observance of it is their bounden duty and service. This, I say, is not my subject; nor does my concern lay with such at this time. But my subject, text, and business, lay with, and concern the children of the most high God; who are born again of the Spirit—made partakers of a divine nature—have the love of God manifested unto them—and the love of God shed abroad in their hearts: who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, and desire to have their daily conversation with him.

Such persons feel their spiritual infirmities; and so did Paul, and the faints at Rome, and this is the cordial he hath to comfort them with. *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.* The truths contained in these words, being more precious and valuable than the gold of Ophir, I will endeavour to divide the subject thus.

First, by considering the infirmities of the faints, and their not knowing what they should pray for as they ought.

Secondly, how the Holy Spirit helpeth them. *The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Thirdly, how acceptable this is to God. *And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.*

Or, if this division does not seem so easy as you might wish, take it thus: here is, first, our insufficiency to pray without the Spirit. Secondly, the Spirit's sufficiency to quicken and direct us in prayer, and that, both as it respects manner and matter. As for the manner, it is with groanings which cannot be uttered. As to the matter, it is according to the will of God. Choose which division you please, I shall endeavour to preserve all that is contained in both in my exposition on the words before us.

I proposed, as the first particular, to consider the infirmities of the faints, those which Paul's eye was upon, and which attend them in the exercise of prayer. *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought:* which manifestly points out our insufficiency to pray without the Spirit. The Spirit of God dwells as a life-giving, and life-maintaining Spirit in all the faints. He abides in them as a Spirit of regeneration and sanctification: and as the Spirit of God and of glory, he resteth upon them. Notwithstanding which, the people of God, all of them, more or less, have their natural, sinful, and spiritual weaknesses and infirmities in this life. They are not indeed all equally and alike weak and infirm. Some are weaker in knowledge, faith, and experience, than others. Some are more easily drawn aside through corruption and temptation than others. Some have less gifts in prayer than others, yet all have their infirmities. They have Satan's temptations to resist, their own internal concupiscence and corruptions to deny and oppose, and have their particular weaknesses and infirmities attending them in the discharge of duty, and in their daily walk with God. These, to their grief, they find will attend them before, in, and after prayer. Such a burden are indwelling sin, coldness of heart, and want of fervent love to the Lord Jesus Christ, their natural backwardness to pray, and the deadness and distraction which sometimes beset them in the discharge of the privilege and duty of prayer, that they would inevitably sink with soul-distress, and faint in their minds, did not the Spirit help their infirmities. By the Spirit,

is not meant the Spirit of prayer in us, or the gift of the Spirit in prayer, but the Holy Spirit of God himself, who helpeth faints, by drawing forth into act and exercise, their faith, hope, and love, upon our Lord Jesus Christ; bringing home to their memories the precious truths and promises of God's word; shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts; acting the part of a comforter to them, and by strengthening them with strength in their souls. He assists them in a very particular manner in prayer, gives them a feeling sense of their wants, teaches them their constant need of Christ, sends them to the throne with outcries for grace and mercy to help them in every time of need, and makes them importunate with their heavenly Father, that they may receive and obtain the blessings which they desire of him. The people of God cannot pray without the Spirit; they are quite insufficient of themselves for this glorious, divine, and heavenly exercise. Prayer is an instituted means of grace, whereby the soul converses with God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in which his people at times have actual fellowship with the Father in his love, with the Son in his salvation, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. And the eternal Three likewise converse with saints herein; so that the principal communion which believers have this side glory, with the Three which bear record in heaven, is chiefly in the ordinances of prayer and praise: this being the very design of it, that the Lord's regenerated and called ones should breathe out their desires after him, make known their wants unto him, and find, by blessed experience, that

it is good to draw nigh unto God. Real saints are insufficient of themselves, without the sacred agency and energy of the divine Spirit, for this heavenly exercise, seeing they *know not what they should pray for as they ought*. This, however, has not a reference so much to spiritual as temporal things. The child of God hath in the written word, a blessed directory for prayer: follow him to the throne, and you will find him pray agreeably to his present case and experience: if under the hidings of the Lord's countenance, he will beg for it to be lifted up upon him: if under present guilt and distress, he will pray for discoveries and manifestations of pardoning mercy: if iniquities prevail, he will pray to Christ to put forth his power to subdue them: if in trouble through manifold temptations, he will be entreating the Lord to be with him in the hour of temptation, and make a way for his escape. Spiritual blessings, such as communion with God, enlargement of heart heavenward, and spiritual alacrity to run with delight the way of God's commandments, are the principal things requested. So that here, as we shall see before we conclude, the believing people of God, are not so much at a loss about what they should pray for respecting their souls, as they are for what belongs unto, and hath respect to their temporal concerns. Under peculiar dispensations of divine Providence towards them, when exercised with bodily affliction, such as sickness, poverty, and outward distress, they, not knowing clearly the mind and will of their heavenly Father herein, nor his end and design by them, are at a loss to know what to pray for,

whether for deliverance from it, or for a sanctified use of affliction, and a resigned will to their heavenly Father's pleasure with and towards them. They are not capable of judging for themselves, nor know which would be best for them, a state of prosperity or adversity; riches or poverty; freedom from temptations, or to be tried with them. The Lord's people are not ignorant that God is the object of prayer; and that JEHOVAH, in his divine persons, is to be addressed, and his divine perfections celebrated. They are brought by the Holy Spirit to approach the divine persons in their covenant offices; to know the Lord their God; to love him for his great love wherewith he hath loved them, of which he hath given them this surprising instance, the gift of his only begotten Son to be the propitiation for their sins. Under the teaching of the Spirit, they approach the throne of grace, to call upon the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and under the same teaching they are enabled to come into his presence in the name, person, righteousness, and atonement of God's beloved Son, who is coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, the all-glorious Mediator of his church and people. The access which they have to the Father in the Son, is through the grace of the eternal Spirit. He dwells in believers, and consecrates their hearts for the enjoyment of fellowship with the Father and the Son. He is sent from the Father and the Son, and bestowed by them upon believers, as *the Spirit of grace and of supplications*; he is the breather of all spiritual life into them; he acts the part of a most gracious Comforter

and Advocate in them; leads them to seek the Lord; instructs and counsels them in what they should pray for; gives them at times holy liberty and boldness; leads them into such views and discoveries of the Father's love towards them in his dear Son, and gives them in prayer such rich enjoyment of it, that they can say, *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

I go on, and proceed to my second particular, how the Holy Spirit helpeth the saints, and his sufficiency to quicken and direct in prayer. *The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.* All the faculties of the soul are to be engaged, and the whole mind should be employed in it. *We are, saith Paul, of the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit.* Worship is a spiritual act. It is the offering up the inward desires of our souls to the Lord. It is plainly and precisely a spiritual breathing after God: and by it may be known what the Lord hath done for our souls. It consists not so much in words and modes of expression, as in strong desires and vehement breathings after communion with our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father in him. Many a poor saint is troubled because he cannot find words to express his desires in prayer to the Lord: he thinks it is not prayer, because not performed in that excellent way, in which some believers discharge it. It is most certainly a blessing, when public persons can take in the various cases of those they pray for. I speak not therefore against gifts and enlargements in

prayer : but let none who love the Lord Jesus Christ, be discouraged because they possess not gifts in so great a degree. Beloved ! real prayer, inwrought prayer, arising from the breathing of the Spirit of God in the heart, is a very simple thing. To give an instance or example : Are there not some of you, who go to God in prayer ? and yet at times, it may be, this is your case, you cannot pray—you feel hardness of heart, but you mourn over it. You feel your inability to pray, but you groan upon the account of it. You feel your want of the Lord's gracious presence, and your desires, though you do not at present enjoy the blessing, are ardent, and vehement. This, little as you think of it, is real prayer. Your secret desires after God ; your earnest longing for his gracious presence ; your mourning because you do not enjoy more communion with God, are the blessed fruits and effects of the Holy Spirit's dwelling in you. Let me tell you, there is no spiritual desire in your souls, but God is well pleased with. He reads your hearts, observes what you groan and long for ; and he hath said, *The desire of the righteous shall be granted.* But let us more particularly attend to this,—how the Spirit helpeth the faints in prayer, and his sufficiency to quicken and direct us in the discharge of it. As it is his one great and principal work and office in us, to teach us experimentally our spiritual wants, so he leads us to seek to the Lord to relieve them. He teacheth us that, *It pleased the Father, that in him (the word made flesh) should all fulness dwell.* And that, *out of his fulness we are to receive grace for grace : that the Father gives, Christ dispenses, and in believing, we receive the*

bleffings of grace which are freely given unto us of God. That for all these bleffings, the Lord will be fought unto by us; and in our seeking him, he hath promised to renew our spiritual strength. That his word of promise is our warrant for expecting to receive what we need. Thus the Holy Spirit deals graciously with us, shewing us our wants, and giving us to feel them; in order that he may beget in our hearts fuitable desires to have our wants supplied. And he presents to our view, opens to our understandings, and brings home to our hearts, some exceedingly fuitable promise, exactly agreeable to our present state and case, and by his secret and divine teaching, encourages us to plead it with the Lord, and to pray it over, thereby strengthening our expectations, and encouraging our hope in God. You that are truly praying persons, have often found it thus with you: when you have first engaged in prayer, you have at times found little life or comfort coming into your souls in it; but before you have finished, the blessed Spirit hath quickened you, by giving you such thoughts of the love, grace, and mercy of God, as have lifted you off from yourselves, and carried you up in faith and meditation within the vail. You will find it necessary to observe, what dealings your souls have with God in prayer, and how your hearts are engaged with him in it, and drawn towards him: for as you are with God in prayer, so you will be more or less in all your other spiritual exercifes. Sometimes you are particularly engaged with the Lord, entreating him to

discover his love unto you, and he answers it this way: the Holy Spirit, while you are thus praying, gives you such thoughts and views of it, and raises your apprehensions concerning it to such a degree, that you cannot express them, because you find in your own experience, that it surpasseth all understanding. So it is also at particular seasons when you are bewailing the sinfulness of sin, and imploring a discovering sight of pardoning grace and mercy, the Holy Spirit is pleased to present to your mind, and bring to your remembrance, such blessed declarations of mercy in the word, as fill your hearts with holy hope in the Lord. I add, this is the cause why you have at some seasons, and in some parts of prayer, more liberty, boldness, and enlargement of heart; it is because the Spirit is pleased to give you direct and immediate communion with God in Christ. Thus, the Holy Spirit quickens believers in prayer, draws up their hearts unto the Lord, divinely breathes upon their souls, and directs them in it; by which they sometimes know more of their heavenly Father's love, and of the person, work, and offices of their Lord and Saviour, than by any other means. The Holy Spirit falls in a very abundant manner, upon his people, at times, when engaged in prayer: sometimes, at the beginning, at other times, in the middle, or at the conclusion. And let me give you who are the people of God this hint: when this is the case, it is good to go on and proceed, for God is hereby giving you to know, that he hath accepted your persons in the beloved, and accepts your sacrifices also: and generally it is a blessed pledge, that you

shall actually see and receive blessed and gracious answers to your petitions. I may further observe, the Spirit's sufficiency to help in prayer. First, as to the manner, it is *with groanings which cannot be uttered*. And, secondly, as to the matter, it is *according to the will of God*. Believers have two most powerful advocates pleading on their behalf, the one on earth, the other in heaven. Jesus Christ is a most glorious and powerful advocate before the throne, with the Father, on the behalf of his people, who always appears on their behalf in his Father's presence, as their intercessor, and everlasting friend. You have, believers, likewise, the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in you, and who is, by way of excellency, called *the Comforter*, which, the learned say, is the very same word in the Greek, translated in the second chapter of John's first epistle, verse the first, *Advocate*. Our text tells us, that *the Spirit maketh intercession for us*. As Christ is an advocate with God for us, so the Spirit is an advocate with God in us. Christ is an advocate, pleading for us in his own name; the Spirit is an advocate assisting us to plead for ourselves in Christ's name. As Christ pleads for us in the presence of God; so the Spirit directs us to such arguments, founded upon Christ's intercession, as may be used as pleas for ourselves. *The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*. The Spirit doth not groan himself, but he excites in us strong groans, by affecting us with our own condition, making us importunate in our supplications, and strengthening us in the inward man. The Holy

Spirit is an advocate to indite our petitions; and Christ is an advocate to present them. The Spirit is our intercessor on earth, as Christ is in heaven; and as Christ answers all charges, and clears us at his Father's bar, so the Spirit answers the accusations of sin in the court of conscience, by pleading the everlasting virtue of the blood of Jesus: hereby he pleads for our peace below. And the voice of God's Spirit is as mighty in us, as the voice of Christ's blood is mighty for us. The importunate breathings and desires of the Lord's people after him, are here very strongly expressed. *The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* It implies that their desires, their vehement breathings and importunity with God are such as no words can express; it is also expressive of the almighty grace, which the Holy Spirit is pleased to communicate and impart unto believers. Therefore, when you experience freedom with the Lord in prayer; when all your spiritual faculties are engaged therein; when your whole soul is drawn out, and your heart fixed upon the Lord in worship, know that all this is to be ascribed to the love of the Holy Spirit towards you, and to his divine, heavenly, and spiritual operations in you. Learn to give him the praise and glory, and look upon this as the fruit and effect of his own grace working in you, and upon you. Let us, secondly, consider the Spirit's sufficiency to help in prayer, by observing the matter which he directs us to, as well as the manner in which we are to express ourselves. As the manner is, *with groanings which cannot be uttered,* so the matter is

according to the will of God. *The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.* He knows the whole heart of God, and also the whole of his revealed will, and he leads saints to pray agreeably thereto. God's promises, as they are both matter and foundation for our faith, so are they also for prayer. The Holy Spirit brings them to remembrance, and helps the saints to pray for the fulfilment of them, agreeably to their various cases and necessities. The word of God's promise is the rule for prayer—the Holy Spirit is the inditer of it; hence believers are said to pray *in the Holy Ghost*. As they approach the Father in the Son's name, the Spirit teacheth them what they shall pray for; he draws out their faith; fixeth it upon God's promise; helps them to wrestle with the Lord for the fulfilment of it; and through his sacred influences in them they offer up their petitions with a divine energy. The Spirit, as he knows all the cases, wants, and experiences of all believers: so he likewise knows the whole mind and will of God towards and concerning them; and he directs them in prayer accordingly. He knows the love of God, his thoughts regarding his people, what he hath decreed in his purpose, and declared in his promise for their comfort; and it is his holy pleasure and delight, to suggest to the minds of his praying people, such Scripture encouragements as help them to be bold with God. He, in prayer, secretly and imperceptibly brings to their remembrance, such Scripture motives and arguments, as he knows will prevail with the Lord to bestow upon them, such grace, blessings,

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and benefits, as they are brought to feel their need and want of You may see the truth of this, by observing all the prayers which are upon record in the infallible Scriptures of truth. Look into the Old Testament, you will find the prayers of saints founded upon God's revealed will in the word of promise, and strong arguments made use of to entreat God to hear and answer them. The pleas and motives are all drawn from what God is to his people in the everlasting covenant. When guilt hath been confessed, and sin acknowledged, his name, mercy, and long-suffering towards his church in a covenant way, have been used and urged as a motive for his displaying fresh discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy. The relation which the Lord stands in to his people in Christ Jesus is often urged by Old Testament saints, for the obtaining their suit and request. In the New Testament, you will find all this improved, and every apostolic prayer, put up in the full persuasion and confidence, that God is at everlasting peace with all his people in Christ Jesus, whose blood cleanseth his church and people from all sin. You who are believers, if you search your hearts, will find God's word dwelling in you laid as the foundation of all your prayers. And though you know that God is not, cannot be wrought upon by you, and that his promises are given, not with a design to move him, but to strengthen your faith: yet this you have found, and still find, that the Holy Spirit helps you to spread the Lord's own word before him, and to put him in remembrance of it, and that in so doing, he gives

you such boldness and holy familiarity with the Lord, as encourage you to expect from him all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. From what hath, therefore, been delivered, we learn, that the Holy Spirit puts us upon praying, teacheth us what to say, and encourages us in it.

I go on and proceed to my third particular, to consider, how acceptable this is to God. *And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.* To search the heart is God's peculiar property, it belongs exclusively to him, is his divine prerogative, and he only knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, the affectionate desire and meaning of the Spirit of God, in the unutterable groans of the faints. God knows the breathing of his own Spirit, and is well pleased with it. Every holy motion and desire excited by him in the soul, is well-pleasing to the Lord. God's reading or searching the heart, as here spoken of, is for the real good and benefit of his children, he having given unto them the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry, *Abba, Father.* He is well pleased with their approaches unto him under the influences of the same Spirit, who dwells in them, and puts forth by the powerful energy of his own grace every spiritual act in them and by them. You see, that spiritual breathings and groanings in the hearts of faints, are here said to be the mind of the Spirit, and God takes notice of it, searcheth the heart for it, and will answer it by his gracious acceptance of it: and by giving those blessings to his children, which they are thus breathing for. The Spirit

hereby maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. The Spirit stirreth up the heart to ask those very things which the Lord means to bestow; and he maketh intercession in us, by bringing God's love to our remembrance, and by putting us upon pleading the Lord's own word with him; and God cannot deny himself. So that hereby the Spirit maketh intercession for us also, for he puts us upon asking according to the will of God. It is the meaning of the Spirit which God looks to, more than the expressions we use, for our groanings are said to be unutterable. Does not this hold forth most blessed encouragement to you who are the Lord's; to you whose spiritual desires are expressed in sighs and inward breathings, more than in any other way? You are ready to think and write bitter things against yourselves, it may be, because this is your case, because you cannot go with more holy cheerfulness and alacrity to God in prayer. Hear what the prophet David saith, *Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.* Did you never, in experience, find the truth of this? Let me ask you, ye dearly beloved in the Lord, hath it not sometimes surprised and filled you with holy wonder, gratitude, and praise, to think of the unexpected way, in which the Lord hath given you the desires of your soul? When you have in a way of desire only, been longing for the Lord's presence, it hath been sometimes the case with you, that this hath been enjoyed when you least expected it; and I add, it hath been in answer to your prayers.

I doubt not but you have in experience been filled with admiration, many a time, at God's giving you, not the request of your lips only, but the desires of your heart. Such prayers, which, in your own esteem, have been no better than the *chattering of a crane, or a swallow*, have been more taken notice of than you ever expected. The weakness, sinfulness, and unworthiness which accompanied you in the exercise of them, gave you to think your heavenly Father would be altogether regardless of them, whereas, these have been more answered and fulfilled unto you, than many others offered up at the throne, more acceptable to yourselves. Spiritual desires and holy breathings, are prayer in God's account, and he regards and will answer them as such. The children of God are too often discouraged from praying, and expecting to receive abundantly from the Lord, on account of their own wretchedness and unworthiness: though it would be well, if it was wholly out of their sight in prayer, because they are asking their heavenly Father for such blessings in his Son's name, as they cannot possibly do without it. So that here, their unworthiness ought not to discourage, but to make them the more importunate. James tells us, *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*. He knew no body would object to this: but he knew real saints would be ready to think that their own personal infirmities, their corruptions, and sinfulness, would render their prayers unsuccessful, and therefore to remove such an objection, adds *Elias* (*i. e.* the prophet Elijah, who was so remarkable for prayer, and for

being heard in prayer, and answered by the Lord) *was a man subject to like passions as we are; (i. e. he was not free from sinful passions, as impatience, fear, and unbelief, see 1 Kings xvii. 2. and chap xix. 3, 4, 10, 18.) And he prayed earnestly (or, prayed in prayer) that it might not rain: and his prayer was heard, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.* The apostle's view and design in this recital, is to prove, that the weakness and infirmities of the saints, ought not to discourage them from prayer, and also that they should be earnest and fervent in it, as was Elias, a man of like passions with themselves. This properly attended unto, may serve, beloved, to remove the same discouragements from us also. It is good in prayer to go to our heavenly Father, in the firm belief of his being our Father in Jesus. Paul speaks thus: *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.* By which he means, that we should not draw near with the body only, but with the heart principally, with a renewed one, which is right with God, is hearty in its desires, and upright in its ends, *in full assurance* that God is at perfect peace with all his people in Christ, and hath nothing in his heart but love towards them. It does not mean a full assurance of faith concerning our personal interest in it, so much as a full assurance of faith concerning the truth of God's being fully and everlasting reconciled unto all his people, through the most precious blood-

shedding of his dear Son. *Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,* by faith in the most precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin, *and our bodies washed with pure water,* the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is often compared to water in the Scripture, and real internal grace which influences our outward actions, which adorn religion, and without which our bodies cannot be presented holy unto God. He exhorts us to *bold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.* From the consideration of the sacrifice of Christ, its eternal dignity, and everlasting efficacy, he exhorts believers to the exercise of faith in prayer, and to draw nigh to God, to the throne of grace, in the sincerity of their hearts, in purity of soul and body. And that from the following considerations,—their having liberty and boldness to enter by faith into heaven itself with their prayers, through the blood of Jesus; who hath opened for them, and is unto them a new, living, and consecrated way, for their access into their heavenly Father's presence. *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.* As it is in Christ that believers are accepted, so it is through his all-glorious mediation, that their prayers and praises are accepted also. It is good for us, at the throne, to have our eye fixed on, and our faith employed in considering the eternal worth and worthiness of the person, work, and intercession of our adorable Saviour. As the Father is well pleased with him; so he is also with every spiritual act of worship, performed in the faith of its being accepted in him, who is the altar which sanctifies the gift. Thus I have endea-

voured to lay before you, how the Spirit helpeth the faints, and quickens and directs them in prayer, and that he maketh intercession in them with groanings which cannot be uttered. I have likewise endeavoured to shew you, that as this is agreeable to the will of God, it cannot but be acceptable unto him. That it is agreeable to God's will, appears from the Spirit's exciting and stirring up believers to pray agreeably to God's will of promise. And here I may add, by way of observation, that the Lord's called people, have encouragement upon encouragement, to excite them to the practice and discharge of this duty. The throne they approach is a throne of grace. Their heavenly Father is on it, on purpose to hear their complaints, and grant their desires. As true prayer is the breathing of his own Spirit, and according to his will, it is highly acceptable unto him. And, believers having two such powerful advocates, Christ in heaven for them, and the Spirit in them; the one pleading before the throne of the Majesty in the heavens for them, and the other pleading in them at the throne of grace, and agreeably to the will of their heavenly Father, the children of God will be as wrestling Jacobs, and must come off prevailing Israels. Oh that we might experience much of the Spirit's powerful efficacy and energy in prayer, and go on to pray in faith, and in the Holy Ghost. May what hath been delivered, agreeable to his will, meet with your acceptance, and prove beneficial to you. The Lord pardon what is amiss, and accompany his own truth with his divine blessing. *Amen.*