

gifts God is willing to bestow; in such ignorance it is better not to pray." When the world by wisdom knows not the truth, He reveals it to them by His word. He points them to a path by which His will shall be performed, and yet the desires of His people shall be fulfilled.

Our text contains a statement of the case. In this passage Paul admits our inability to pray aright. He frankly says, "We do not know what we should pray for as we ought." What then? Does he conclude that we ought not to pray? Not at all. He is the apostle who bids us "pray without ceasing," and who exhorts us to "be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known unto God, and promises that "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." How does he solve the difficulty? In this way. He says that God assists us in our need, and teaches us how we may come with confidence and acceptance to His throne in prayer. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." That holy guide and comforter, whom the Saviour promised His disciples He would send to abide with them and to lead them into all truth, comes to us, moves our hearts, turns our desires to the things that He approves, melts our wills into submission and agreement with His own, and so brings us to ask from God what He desires to impart. The sovereign and the suppliant are in harmony. God upon His throne and man upon His knees are now at one. The breach is healed, the stumbling block is taken away. "The Spirit maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." This certainly presents to us true prayer. Humble and importunate on earth, acceptable and prevalent in Heaven. It reminds us of a couplet in one of our old hymns—

"Prayer is the breath of God in man,
Returning whence it came."

and of still another in the same hymn—

"When God inclines the heart to pray,
He has an ear to hear."

Some of the hymns we sing are neither beautiful in their poetry nor sound in their theology, but this is both. It is not true that men may pray of their own fancy or desire! that they may ask God for anything they want, and get whatever they may ask. Such power would contradict the government of God, and would deliver