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PRAYER.

A SERMON

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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.—Rom. viii. 26-28.

HOW can God answer prayer? He has His own plans for governing the universe. The church creeds speak of His eternal and unchangeable decrees. How can He stop or turn aside His purposes to meet our wishes and requests? Is it possible for Him to work His will and at the same time to grant the things we ask in prayer? This is an old and a hard question. Men often ask it, but cannot find a satisfactory reply. It lies like a great rock across their path. They are not able to remove or to surmount it. They stop before it, and never enter the gate of prayer and peace upon its farther side. God's hand only can remove this hindrance. Reason gives but little light upon the problem. Left to ourselves, we grow perplexed, and are in danger of becoming wholly lost. Some of the greatest thinkers, both of ancient and modern times, have come to the conclusion that it is vain for men to pray at all. They say: "We cannot tell what things are good for us; we do not know what