

to say, "Most gladly therefore will I rather *glory* in infirmities, *that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*" It was not sin in which he gloried; people often call their sins, the spirit of unbelief, and the like, infirmities; the things wherein he gloried were—affliction, persecutions, distresses for Christ's sake, &c.; for through them he learnt the sufficiency of the Lord's grace.

John says, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, *if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.*" Now how are we to know the Lord's will from our own fancies and imaginations? By His word. If I go and pray for a thing not founded on the knowledge of the Lord's will as revealed in His word, I cannot have confidence about it. Were He to grant me what I desire, He might very likely only be answering my own foolish, corrupt will. If my flesh is at work, and my soul is not brought into obedience and subjection to the word, I cannot be "praying in the Spirit." The first thing the Spirit would do would be to humble me by the word into a sense of the condition in which my soul is. Supposing, for instance, I am walking carelessly and inconsistently, and yet am beginning to ask, as a very great Christian, for things only suited to the state of such an one; if the Lord were to answer my petition, it would only tend to make me a hypocrite: the first thing the Spirit would do in such a case would be to make me