

SERMON XXXIV.

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.—
ROM. viii. 26.

IN the context you have several arguments to persuade to patience under affliction; those two that are of chief consideration are, the hope of glory to come, and the help of the Spirit for the present. This latter is in the text.

In this verse, 1. The help of the Spirit is generally asserted.

2. The reason evidencing the necessity of that help.

1. The Author. 2. The manner of the Spirit's assistance. 3. The particular assistance, where we have—

1. The help of the Spirit is generally asserted—'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.' By infirmities he meaneth afflictions, and the perturbations occasioned thereby, as fretting or fainting; or more generally any sinful infirmities, as ignorance, distrust, &c. For afflictions; see 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10, 'And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness; most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.' For sins, see Heb. v. 2, 3, 'Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmities; and by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.' The word for help is notable, *συναντιλαμβάνεται* helpeth our infirmities (a Mark ix. 24, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief,' help me against it); which we render, 'he helpeth also,' joineth in relieving, helpeth us under our infirmities, goeth to the other end of the staff, and beareth a part of the burden with us; the word signifieth to lift up a burden with another. In afflictions we are not alone, but we have the Holy Ghost as our auxiliary comforter, who strengtheneth and beareth us up when we are weak and ready to sink under our burden.

2. The reason evincing the necessity of that help; 'for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.' In which there is—

[1.] Something intimated and implied; that prayer is a great stay in afflictions. James v. 13, 'If any among you be afflicted, let them pray.' God doth afflict us not that we may swallow our griefs, but vent them in prayer. We have no other way to relieve ourselves in any distress, but by serious addresses to God; this is the means appointed by God to procure comfort to the distressed mind, safety to those that are in danger, relief to them that are in want, strength to them that are in weakness; in short, the only means for obtaining good and removing evil, whether temptations, dangers, enemies, sin, sorrows, fears, cares, poverty, shame, sickness. God is our only help against all these, and prayer is the means to obtain relief from him; yea, all grace and strength, and the greatest mercies that we desire and stand in need of.

[2.] That which is expressed, that we know not how to conceive our prayers aright, either as to matter or manner. It is said of Zebedee's children, 'Ye know not what ye ask,' Mat. xx. 22; and it is true of all others also; we often beg a mischief to ourselves instead of a blessing. In those times they were subject to great persecutions, and therefore prayed for an exemption from them; which not happening according to desire, they were troubled. Therefore the apostle telleth them, 'We know not what we should pray for as we ought;' we know not what is absolutely best for us till the Spirit enlighten and direct us. There is a darkness and confusion in our minds; we consult with the flesh, and ask what is most easy, and what is most advantageous. The Spirit of God knoweth what we most stand in need of, and is best for our turn, health, wealth, honour; or sickness, poverty, and disgrace. There is need of great consideration when we pray, more than good men commonly think of; that we may neither ask things unlawful, nor lawful things amiss, James iv. 3. We know not what spirit we are of, Luke ix. 55; we count revenge, zeal; therefore the Holy Ghost doth instruct and direct our motions in prayer, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

[3.] The particular assistance we have from him is mentioned—'But the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered.' Where observe—

(1.) The author of this help and assistance; 'The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us;' not that the Spirit prayeth, but sets us a-praying. As here the Spirit is said to pray in us, so elsewhere we are said to 'pray in the Holy Ghost,' Jude 20. He prayeth, as Solomon is said to build the temple; he did not do the carpenter's or mason's work, but he directed how to build, found out workmen, and furnished them with money and materials. Neither doth the Spirit make intercession for us as Christ doth, Rom. viii. 34, 'Who is at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us;' presenting himself to God for us. The drawing up of a petition is one thing, the presenting it in court is another; the Spirit as a notary inditeth our requests, and, as an advocate, presenteth them, and pleadeth them in court.

(2.) The manner of his help and assistance. He stirreth up in us ardent groans in prayer, or worketh up our hearts to God with desires expressed by sighs and groans. *Στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις*, may be rendered unuttered groans, as well as unutterable, and so some take it here; and indeed that way it beareth a good sense. That the virtue of true prayer doth not consist in the number and artifice of words, as those that thought they should be heard for their vain babblings and much speaking, Mat. vi. 7. Alas! the greatest command and flow of words is but babbling, without these secret sighs and groans which the lively motions of the Spirit stirreth up in us. There may be this without words; as Moses cried unto the Lord though he uttered no words, Exod. xiv. 15. Or unutterable; whatsoever proceedeth from a supernatural motion of the Spirit, its fervour and efficacy and force cannot be apprehended or expressed: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' and Phil. iv. 7, 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds.' In short, the sum of all is this: we have no reason to faint under afflictions, since there is help in prayer; and these prayers are not in vain, being excited by the Spirit dwelling

in us; we are ignorant, and he teacheth us what to pray for, and assisteth us by his holy inspirations; we are cold and backward, and he inflameth us, and exciteth us to pray with fervour, and holy sighs and groans.

The points from this verse are three—

1. That the Holy Spirit doth strengthen and bear us up in our weaknesses and troubles, that we may not faint under them.

2. That prayer is one special means by which God's Holy Spirit helps God's children in their troubles and afflictions.

3. That the prayers of the godly come from God's Spirit.

Doct. For the first point, that the Holy Spirit doth strengthen and bear us up in our weaknesses and troubles, that we may not faint under them.

The sense of this doctrine I shall give you in these four considerations—

1. That it is a great infirmity and weakness if a christian should faint in the day of trouble. The two extremes are slighting and fainting: Heb. xii. 5, 'My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint under it;' so Prov. xxiv. 10, 'If thou faintest in the day of trouble, thy strength is small.' Partly because there is so little reason for a christian's fainting. Who should be more undisturbed in the world than he who hath God for his God, Christ for his saviour, and the Spirit for his comforter, and heaven for his portion? Partly because there is so much help from God. Either he hath already obtained strength from God which he doth not improve, or may obtain strength from God which he doth not seek after. God, prayed unto, giveth deliverance or support: Ps. cxxxviii. 3, 'In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' And partly because of the mischiefs which follow this fainting. There is a twofold fainting—

[1.] There is a fainting which causeth great trouble, perplexity, and dejection of spirit: Heb. xii. 3, 'Lest ye wax weary, and faint in your minds.' Weariness is a lesser, fainting an higher degree of deficiency; in weariness the body requireth some rest or refreshment, when the active power is weakened, and the vital spirits and principles of motion dulled; but in fainting the vital power is contracted, and retireth, and leaveth the outward parts lifeless and senseless. When a man is wearied, his strength is abated; but when he fainteth, he is quite spent. These things, by a metaphor, are applied to the soul or mind. A man is wearied when the fortitude of his mind or his spiritual strength is broken or beginneth to abate, or his soul sits uneasy under sufferings; but when he sinketh under the burden of grievous, tedious, and long afflictions, then he is said to faint; the reasons or grounds of his comfort are quite spent. Now this is a great evil in a child of God; for the spirit of a man, or that natural courage that is in a reasonable creature, will go far as to the sustaining of foreign evils: Prov. xviii. 14, 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity.' And it is supposed of a christian that his spirit is sound and whole, being possessed of the love of God; and therefore, though his natural courage be spent, which goeth on probabilities, yet his faith and hope should not be spent, which goeth on certainties, nor be overmuch perplexed about worldly troubles, as if his mercy were clean gone, or his promise would fail. Therefore a christian should strive against this: Ps. lxxvii. 7-10, 'Will the Lord

cast off for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? And I said, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.'

[2.] There is a fainting which causeth dejection and falling off from God. Surely this worse becometh the children of God: Rev. ii. 3, 'Thou hast borne and hast patience, and hast laboured and hast not fainted.' This maketh us cast off our profession and practice of godliness, and so cuts us off from all hope of reward: Gal. vi. 9, 'Ye shall reap in due time, if ye faint not.' It is not taken there for some weariness, or remissness, or perplexity, which may befall God's children, but a total defection. When troubles discourage us in our duty, it is a step towards it, and tendeth to apostasy, which christians should prevent in time: Heb. xii. 12, 13, 'Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way.' We often begin to faint, and lag in heaven's way, being wearied and vexed with the oppositions of the carnal world, reproaching, threatening, and persecuting us; but when we begin to waver, we should look to it betimes, and rouse up ourselves, that we may resolve to go on and finish our race, and not lose the benefit of our former labours and sufferings.

2. Consideration, That in this weakness, if be we left to ourselves, we cannot support ourselves. This appeareth, partly because they that have but a light tincture of the Spirit give up at the first assault: Mat. xiii. 21, 'When tribulation ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.' Offers of pardon of sins and eternal life affect them for a while, and engage them in the profession of godliness; but when once it cometh to prove a costly business, they give it over presently. And partly because the most resolved, if not duly possessed with a sense of their own weakness, soon miscarry, if not in whole, yet in part; witness Peter, Mat. xxvi. 33-35. Christ had warned them that such afflictions should come, as the stoutest should stumble at them, and fall for a time; but Peter, being conscious to himself of his own sincerity, could not believe such weakness to be in him; but God will soon confute confidence in our own strength, as the event of his fearful fall did evidently declare. Partly because they that seem to be most fortified, not only by resolution, but strong reasons, may yet overlook them in a time of temptation. As Eliphaz told Job, chap. iv. 3-5, 'Behold, thou hast instructed many, and hast strengthened the weak hands; thy words have upholden him that was falling; and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.' It is one thing to give counsel, and another to practise it; and there is a great deal of difference between trial apprehended by our judgment and felt by our sense: John xii. 27, 'Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour.' When well, we easily give counsel to the sick; they that stand on shore may direct others when struggling with a tempest. And besides, we know many things habitually which we cannot actually bring to remembrance, being overcome with the sense of present evils; and grace that

seemeth strong out of trial is found weak in trial, and faileth when we should most act it. And partly because those that do not wholly despond, but are yet wrestling, are plainly convinced that they cannot conquer by their own strength: Jer. viii. 18, 'When I would comfort myself against my sorrow, my heart fainteth within me.' The tediousness of present pressures doth so invade their spirits, that they find themselves much too weak to grapple with their troubles; they essay to do it, but find it too hard for them. Now after all these experiences of the saints, where is the man that will venture in his own strength to compose his spirit and overcome his own infirmities?

3. That when we cannot support ourselves through our weakness, the Spirit helpeth us. We speak not of the necessity of the Holy Spirit to our regeneration, but confirmation. After grace received, worldly things set near and close to us, and the love of them is not so quite extinct in us but that they have too great a command over our inclinations and affections, that we cannot overcome our infirmities without the assistance of grace, which Christ dispenseth by his Spirit. And it is not enough for us to stand upon our guard and defend ourselves, but we must implore the divine assistance, which is engaged for us: Eph. iii. 16, 'That he would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;' 1 Peter i. 5, 'Who are kept by the power of God through faith to salvation;' 1 Cor. x. 13, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape.' The Spirit that enlighteneth a christian fortifieth him, and the same grace which he sheddeth abroad in the soul filleth us both with light and strength, and as a spirit of strength and counsel doth enable us to bear all the afflictions which otherwise would shake and weaken our resolutions for God and heaven.

4. They that rouse up themselves, and use all means, are in a nearer capacity to receive influences from the Spirit than others. For the apostle's word is, 'He helpeth also;' we have been at the work, reasoning and pleading, but he maketh our thoughts effectual: Ps. xxvii. 14, 'Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.' If we do not exercise faith and hope, how can we look for the assistance of the Holy Ghost? If we give way to discouragement, we quit our own comfort; but when we strive to take courage from the grounds of faith, it is followed with strength from God to undergo the trouble; so Ps. xxxi. 24, 'Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.' When we arm ourselves with constancy and fortitude, there is no doubt of God's seasonable relief; but if you, out of love of the ease and contentment of the flesh, give way to difficulties, and despond, how can you expect God's assistance? You banish it from you.

Use 1. Is comfort to the children of God. For the Lord is not a spectator only of our troubles, but an helper in our conflicts—We are set forth as a spectacle to God, men, and angels, 1 Cor. iv. 9; therefore we should see how we acquit ourselves. But our comfort is that he is the strength of our souls, that we are engaged in his cause, and by his power and strength. God will not desert us, or deny to support us,

unless we give him cause by our negligence and grievous sins; no, if you wait upon him, strength will be renewed to you: Isa. xl. 31, 'They that wait on the Lord shall not faint, but renew their strength.' In our weakness he maketh his strength and power to appear, and can enable his servants to do and endure anything rather than quit his cause; they shall have a new supply of strength, when they seem to be clean spent, and overcome all difficulties in the way to heaven.

Use 2. Is direction. To ascribe our standing to the Spirit. We are weak creatures of ourselves, able to do nothing; but through the Spirit of Christ, all things, Phil. iv. 13; that is, go through all conditions. We owe all that we are and all that we do to the Holy Spirit; we live by his presence, understand by his light, act by his power, suffer by the courage he inspireth into us. We are ungrateful to the Holy Spirit if we ascribe that to ourselves as authors, whereof we are scarce servants and ministers. Paul more humbly acknowledges, 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'But by the grace of God I am what I am.'

Use 3. Is exhortation. Let us not faint under our troubles. There are many considerations.

1. Sinners are not discouraged by every inconvenience occasioned by their sins, but can deny themselves for their lusts' sake. And shall we be discouraged in God's service? Every lesser inconvenience that befalleth us in the way of our duty is taken notice of, but the great evils of sin are not regarded. When you see sin's martyrs walk about the streets, or carried to their execution, it should be a shame to christians. Some whose flesh is mangled by their sin, impoverished by their sin, brought to public shame by their sin, die for their sin; and are we so weak when we suffer for Christ?

2. Others have borne far heavier burdens, and yet do not sink under them. The Lord Christ, Heb. xii. 3, 'endured the contradiction of sinners,' and many of his precious servants: Heb. xi. 35, 'They accepted not deliverance, looking for a better resurrection.' They might, upon certain conditions, have been free from their cruel pains and tortures, but these conditions were contrary to the law of God, therefore would not by indirect means get off their trouble. Now, shall we praise their courage and not imitate it? That is to be christians in speculation.

3. God promiseth to moderate the afflictions and sweeten the bitterness of them, lest we should faint: Isa. lvii. 16, 'I will not be wroth for ever, and contend always; for so the spirit should faint, and the soul which I have made.' God hath great consideration of man's infirmity and weakness, and how unable they are to hold out under long and grievous troubles; therefore he stayeth his hand, will not utterly dishearten and discourage his people. A good man will not overburden his beast. If you be satisfied in the wisdom and faithfulness of God's providential government, you have no reason to faint, but keep up your dependence upon him.

4. When reason is tired, faith should supply its place, and we should hope against hope, Rom. iv. 18. Faith can fetch water not only out of the fountain, but out of the rock; when other helps fail, then is a time for God to work.

5. Give vent to the ardour of your desires in prayer: Luke xviii. 1, Christ taught men to 'pray always, and not to faint.' Keep up the

suit, and it will come to an hearing-day ere it be long: Jonah ii. 7, 'When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came unto thee into thy holy temple.' When our infirmity cometh to a degree of faintness, then it is a time to be earnestly dealing with God.

6. What will you get by your fainting, but the creature for God? Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.' Murmuring for prayer? Lam. iii. 39, 40, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? let us search and try our ways, and turn to the Lord.' Unlawful shifts for duty? Isa. xxviii. 15, 'For we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.' This is overmuch haste; will you choose God for your enemy to escape the enmity of man? and perdition for salvation? Heb. x. 39, 'But be not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.' Will you run into hell for fear of burning?

7. The Holy Spirit blesseth these considerations, and doth further comfort the saints, partly by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, Rom. v. 3-5; God's smiles are infinitely able to counterbalance the world's frowns; and partly by a clearer sight of their blessedness to come. Remember your eternal blessings, and how far your afflictions prepare you for them: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 'For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' The greatest trouble cannot make void this hope; yea, it doth prepare you for it; your spiritual estate is bettered by them.

Doct. 2. That prayer is one special means by which the Holy Spirit helpeth God's children in their troubles and afflictions.

1. Troubles are sent for this end, not to drive us from God, but to draw us to him: Ps. l. 15, 'And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Trouble in itself is a part of the curse introduced by sin. When God seemeth angry, we have a liberty to apply ourselves to him. In trouble we are apt to think God an enemy, and that he putteth the old covenant in suit against us, but then God expects most to hear from us.

2. Prayer is a special means to ease the heart of our burdensome cares and fears: Phil. iv. 6, 'Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God.' When the wind is got into the caverns of the earth, it causeth earthquakes and terrible convulsions till it get a vent; we give vent to our troublesome and unquiet thoughts by prayer, when we lay our burden at God's feet.

3. It is a special means of acknowledging God as the fountain of our strength and the author of our blessings. First, As the fountain of our strength and support; we have it not in ourselves, and therefore we seek it from God; he is able to keep us from falling, therefore we pray to him: 1 Peter v. 10, 'But the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.' Secondly, As the

author of our deliverance : 2 Tim. iv. 18, ' He shall deliver me from every evil work.'

Use 1. Is to exhort us to prayer. First, He delights to give out blessings this way : Jer. xxix. 11, 12, ' For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall you call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you ;' and Ezek. xxxvi. 37, ' Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do them good.' And our Lord Christ, as mediator, was to ask of the Father : Ps. ii. 8, ' Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.' Secondly, All mercies come the sweeter to us as they increase our love to God and trust in him : Ps. cxvi. 1, 2, ' I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication ; because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.'

Use 2. Is information. If we would have the Spirit's help, let us pray. There we have most sensible feeling of his assistance ; our strength lieth most in asking ; and when we are at a loss what to do, your hearts are more eased in prayer than in any other work. Every condition is sanctified when it bringeth you nearer to God ; if crosses bring us to the throne of grace, they have done their work ; your trouble is eased.

Doct. 3. That the prayers of the godly come from God's Spirit.

That the Spirit hath a great stroke in the prayers of the saints, is evident by many other scriptures besides the text ; as Jude 20, ' Praying in the Holy Ghost ;' that is, by his motion and inspiration. Look, as we breathe out that air which we first suck in, so the prayer is first breathed into us before breathed out by us ; first inspired, before uttered ; so Zech. xii. 10, ' I will pour upon them a spirit of grace and supplications ;' a spirit of grace will become a spirit of supplications. Where he dwelleth in the heart, he discovereth himself mostly in prayer ; so Gal. iv 6, ' Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' The Spirit's gracious operations are manifested especially in fitting us for, and assisting us in, the duty of prayer. Affectionate and believing prayers are ascribed unto him—' God hath put forth the Spirit of his Son, crying,' &c. Here I shall inquire—

First, In what manner the Spirit concurreth to the prayers of the faithful.

Secondly, What necessity there is of this help and assistance.

Thirdly, Caution against some abuses and mistakes of this doctrine.

For the first, these three things concur in prayer, as different causes of the same effect—the spirit of a man, the new nature, and the Spirit of God. First, There is the spirit of a man, for the Holy Ghost makes use of our understandings for the actuating of our will and affections ; the Spirit bloweth up the fire, though it be our hearts that burn within us. Secondly, The new nature in a christian is more immediately and vigorously operative in prayer than in most other duties ; and the exercise of faith, love, and hope in prayer doth flow from the renewed soul, as the proper inward and vital principle of these actions ; so that

we, and not the Spirit of God, are said to repent, believe, and pray. Well then, there is the heart of man, and the heart renewed and sanctified; for the Spirit, as to his actual motions, doth not blow upon a dead coal. But then there is the Spirit of God, who createth and preserveth these gracious habits in the soul, and doth excite the soul to act, and doth assist it in acting according to them; as, for instance, the natural spirit of man out of self-love willeth and desireth its own good, and its own felicity in general, and is unwilling of destruction and apparent misery, or whatever may occasion it. But then, as we are renewed, this will to good is sanctified, that God is chosen as our portion and felicity, or as the principal good to be desired by us. Faith seeth that the favour and fruition of God in a blessed immortality is our true happiness, and love desireth it above all things, and on the contrary, shunneth damnation and the wrath of God, and sin as sin, and all the apparent dangers of the soul. Hope waiteth and expecteth the fruition of God, and the good things which leadeth to him. Accordingly, we address ourselves to God, and put forth and act this faith, love, and hope in prayer—this our renewed spirit doth; but the Holy Ghost himself is the principal cause of all, who doth create this faith, love, and hope, and still preserve it, and order and actuate it. The soul worketh powerfully and sweetly by an earnest motion and inclination towards God.

SERMON XXXV.

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.—ROM. viii. 26.

WE now come more distinctly to show what the Holy Ghost doth in prayer.

1. He directeth and ordereth our requests so as they may suit with our great end, which is the enjoyment of God. For of ourselves we should pray only after a natural and human affection, which sets up itself instead of God, and self considered as a body rather than a soul, and so asketh bodily things rather than spiritual, and the conveniences of the natural life rather than the enjoyment of the world to come. Let a man alone, and he will sooner ask baits and snares and temptations, than graces and helps, a scorpion instead of fish, and a stone rather than bread. We take counsel of our lusts and interests when we are left to our own private spirit, and so would make God to serve with our sins, and employ him as a minister of our carnal desires; as it is said of them in the wilderness, Ps. lxxviii. 18, 'They tempted God in their hearts by asking meat for their lusts;' our natural will and carnal affections will make us pray ourselves into a snare. In the text it is said, 'We know not what to pray for as we ought;' and in

ver. 27, 'He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' *Karà Θεόν, according to God*; not only with respect to his will, but his glory and our eternal good; so that human and carnal affection shall neither prescribe the matter nor fix the end. To pray in a holy manner is the product of the Spirit, and the fruit of his operation in us. Faith and love and hope are more at work in a serious prayer than human and carnal affection, which referreth all its desires and inclinations to the bodily life.

2. He quickeneth and enliveneth our desires in prayer. There is a holy vehemency and fervour required in prayer, opposite to that careless formality and deadness which otherwise is found in us; these are the 'groanings which cannot be uttered,' spoken of in the text. Groaning noteth the strength and ardency of desire, when there is a warmth and a life and a vigour in prayer. Oh! how flat and dead are our hearts oftentimes, when we want these quickening motions! A flow of words may come from our natural temper, but these lively motions and strong desires from the Spirit of God. It is notable that the prayer which is produced in us by the Spirit is represented by the notion of a cry; twice it is said, teaching us to cry, *Abba, Father*; not with respect to the loudness of the voice, but the earnestness of affection. Crying for help is the most vehement way of asking, used only by persons in great necessity and danger. A prayer without life is as incense without fire, which sendeth forth no perfume or sweet savour. The firing of the sacrifices was a token of God's acceptance; so when warmth of heart cometh from heaven, God testifieth of his gifts.

3. He encourageth and emboldeneth us to come to God as a father. This is one main thing twice mentioned in scripture: Rom. viii. 15, 'We have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*;' and Gal. iv. 6, 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father*.' A great part of the life and comfort of prayer consisteth in coming to God as a reconciled father. Now this is seen in two things (1.) Child-like confidence; (2.) Child-like reverence.

[1.] Child-like confidence, or a familiar owning of God in prayer, when we come to him as little children to their father, for help in their dangers and necessities. Christ hath taught us to say, 'Our Father,' and in every prayer we must be able to say so in one fashion or another; not with our lips, but with our hearts; by option and choice, if not by direct affirmation: Luke xi. 13, 'If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask it?' We forget the duty of children, but God doth not forget the mercies of a father. Let it be the voice of our trust and hope rather than of our lips.

[2.] With child-like reverence, in an humble and awful way. God, that hath the title of a father, will have the honour and respect of a father, Mal. i. 6. If this should breed fear and reverence in us at other times, it should much more when we immediately converse with him: 1 Peter i. 17, 'If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man.' God will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him, Heb. x.; so Phil. iii. 11, 'Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.' Our familiarity with God must not mar

our reverence, nor confidence and delight in him our humility; and serious dealing with God in prayer is wrought in us by the Spirit, in whose light we see both God and ourselves, his majesty and our vileness, his purity and our sinfulness, his greatness and our nothingness.

Secondly, The necessity of this help and assistance.

1. The order and economy of the divine persons showeth it. In the mystery of redemption God is represented as our reconciled God and Father, to whom we come; Christ as the mediator, through whom we have liberty and access to God as our own God; and the Spirit as our guide, sanctifier, and comforter, by whom we come to him. God is represented as the great prince and universal king, into whose presence-chamber poor petitioners are admitted; Christ openeth the door by the merit of his sacrifice, and keepeth it open by his constant intercession, that wrath may be no hindrance on God's part, nor guilt on ours; for otherwise, 'God is a consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29, and sin divides, and separates between God and us, Isa. lix. 2. Then the Spirit doth create, preserve, and quicken and actuate these graces, in the exercise of which this access is managed and carried on; otherwise, such is our impotency and averseness, that we should not make use of this offered benefit: Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.' The enjoyment of the fatherly love of God is the highest happiness, in which the soul doth rest content. Christ is the way by which we come to the Father, and the Spirit our guide, which causeth us to enter in this way, and goeth along with us in it. We cannot look aright to the blessed Father, but we must look to him through the blessed Son, and we cannot look upon the Son but through the blessed Spirit, and so we come aright to God.

2. That prayer may carry proportion with other duties. All the children of God are led by the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 14; as in their whole conversation, so especially in this act of prayer. Look, as in common providence, no creature is exempted from the influence of it; for in him they all live, move, and have their being. Exempt any creature from the dominion of providence, and then that creature would live of itself; so as to gracious and special providence, you cannot exempt one action from the Spirit's influence; for 'we live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit,' Gal. v. 25; we sing with the Spirit, and hear in the Spirit, and serve God in the Spirit; so we pray in the Spirit only. There is a special regard to this duty, because here we have experience of the motions of the renewed soul directly towards God, and so of the comforts and graces of the Spirit, more than in other duties.

3. Because of our impotency. We cannot speak of God without the Spirit, much less to God: 1 Cor. xii. 3, 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;' that is, believe on him as the Messiah and redeemer of the world. It was a deadly state the Redeemer found us in. To lessen man's misery was to lessen the grace of Christ; so we must not extenuate the honour of our sanctifier; we can neither live, nor work, nor walk, nor pray, without the Spirit. The help is not needless if we consider what we are, and what prayer is; what we are, who are enemies to our own happiness and holiness; and prayer, which requireth such serious work. Surely the setting of our hearts and all our hopes upon an invisible glory, and measuring all things thereunto,

is a work too hard for a carnal, sensual creature that is wedded to present satisfactions. And without this there is no praying in a spiritual manner. They that love sin will never heartily pray against it; and they that hate a holy, spiritual, heavenly life, can never seek the advancement of it. Now this is our case: we may babble and speak things by rote, or we may have a natural fervency when we pray for corn, wine, and oil, and justification and sanctification in order thereunto; we may have a wish, but not a serious volition of spiritual and heavenly things, which is the life and soul of prayer.

4. With respect to acceptance: Ps. x. 17, 'When thou preparest the heart, thou bendest the ear;' Rom. viii. 27, 'He knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' God knoweth what is a belch of the flesh, and what is a groan of the Spirit; every voice but that of his Spirit is strange and barbarous to him. He puts us upon holy and just requests; he hath stirred them up in us, as a father teacheth a child to ask what he hath a mind to give him.

Thirdly, Cautions against some abuses and mistakes in prayer.

1. This is not so to be understood as if the matter and words of prayer were immediately to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, as he inspired the holy men of God in their prophesying and penning the holy scripture. We read, 2 Peter i. 21, that 'holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;' and we may say, holy men pray as they are moved by the Holy Ghost. But yet there is a great deal of difference between both these; partly because they were immediately moved and infallibly assisted by the Spirit, so moved and extraordinarily borne through, that they could not err and miscarry; they were free from any fault, failing, or corruption in the matter, form, or words wherein this was expressed; all was purely divine. But in our prayers we find the contrary by sad experience. Partly because it had been a sin in the prophets not to have delivered the same message which they received of the Lord, both for matter, manner, and method; but it is no sin in a child of God against the guidance and governance of God's Spirit, to use another method than he used; to contract and shorten, or to lengthen and enlarge his prayers, as opportunity serveth. And yet the prayer is the prayer of the Spirit, that that is directed, ordered, and quickened by the Spirit.

2. This is not to be understood as if we should never pray till the Spirit moveth us. The prophets were not to prophesy till moved by an extraordinary impulse; for they were not bound by the common law of God's servants or children to see visions, or to prophesy. But we are not to stay from our duty till we see the Spirit moving; but to make use of the power we have as reasonable creatures: Eccles. ix. 10, 'Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might;' and to stir up the gifts and graces that we have as believers: Isa. lxiv. 7, 'And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee;' 2 Tim. i. 6, 'Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee;' and in the way of duty to wait and cry for the necessary influences of the Lord's Spirit: Cant. iv. 16, 'Awake, O north wind! and come, thou south wind! blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow forth; let my beloved

come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.' And to obey his sanctifying motions: Ps. xxvii. 8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.'

3. We cannot say we have not the spirit of prayer, because we have not such freedom of words as may give vent to spiritual affections. If there be a sense of such things as we mainly want, that is, Christ and his graces, and an affectionate desire after them, and we address ourselves to God with these desires in the best fashion we can, that we may have help and relief from him, and you are resolved not to give him over till you have it, you have the spirit of grace and supplications, though it may be you cannot enlarge upon these things with such copiousness of expression as others do. Therefore let us consider what is the spirit of prayer, and how far doth he make use of our natural faculties. I conceive it thus. A man is convinced that his happiness lieth in the enjoyment of God; that there is no enjoyment of God but by Christ, till he be justified and sanctified, and walk in holy obedience to him. The Spirit of God upon this changeth his heart, and it is set within him to seek after God in this way: 1 Chron. xxii. 19, 'Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God;' and Ps. cxix. 36, 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies.' Now, because the will without the affections doth not work strongly, but is like a ship without sails—affections are the vigorous and forcible motions of the will, without which it would lie sluggish and idle, or like a chariot without wheels and horses, or a bird when her wings are clipped—therefore the Holy Ghost stirreth up these affections, and our heart within us makes us willing, and this bringeth the soul to God. For no other can give us satisfaction, but he alone; and the difficulties of salvation are so many that we cannot overcome them but in his power and strength. Now sense of wants, and an earnest desire of a supply, will ordinarily put words into a man's mouth, and affections beget expressions; yet because many accidental reasons may hinder it, the weight of prayer is not to be laid so much upon the expression as the affection. If there be a strong and an earnest desire after grace, it will make us express ourselves to God in the best manner that we can. As long as you pray for necessary graces, and other things in subordination thereunto, and can heartily groan and sigh to God for what you want with respect to your great end, the prayer is well performed. There may be a great petulancy and extravagance of words where there is not a good and an honest heart—vain babblings, without faith, or feeling, or spiritual affections.

4. It is not to be understood as if all that pray graciously had the Spirit in a like measure, or the same persons always in the same measure. No, the wind bloweth where it listeth, John iii. 7, and he giveth us to will and to do. We cannot find the assistance at our own pleasure; some have it in a more plentiful, others in a scanty measure, though all have it. Jesus Christ himself, though he had not the Spirit by measure, yet he exercised and acted the spirit of prayer more at one time: Luke xxii. 44, 'And being in an agony, he prayed, *ἐκτενέστερον*, more earnestly;' his love to God was always the same, but the expression of it different. So God's children seek heavenly things with a weaker degree of desire,

and sometimes with a stronger ; at some times we have the directing work of the Spirit, and are not sensible of those earnest and unexpressible groans ; that is to say, we put up our requests for things lawful and useful, and most necessary for us at the time, but not with that ardour and fervency that we do desire. We cannot say that the Holy Ghost doth not assist these prayers, as sometimes the assistance is given us more largely as to the groaning part, and men are all in a flame. Strong and passionate affections do most bewray themselves, sometimes as a spirit of confidence and holy liberty with our Father, and faith is clearly predominant in prayer ; at other times repentance and child-like reverence and fear are altogether in action in the prayer, and there is a great seriousness, though not such life and vigour or strength of faith as grief for sin, bemoaning our failings.

5. *Gifts* are more necessary when we join with others, and are their mouth to God ; but the *spirit* of prayer is of most use when we are alone, and we have nothing to do but to set ourselves before the searcher of hearts, and draw forth our desires after him ; when, without taking in the necessities of others, we present our personal requests to God, and lament the defects of our own hearts and the plague of our own souls. When we pray alone, it is good to observe the workings of our own hearts ; surely whatever prayer we make to God, we should find it in our hearts : 2 Sam. vii. 27, 'Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.' Having a deep sense of our wants, a real desire of the blessing, we ask exercising grace rather than memory and invention ; pouring out our very souls to God, with sighs and groans rather than words ; we are at liberty there to use or not use the voice, to continue speech and break it off, and lift up the heart by strong desires to God.

Use 1. It informeth us—

First, What kind of help we have from the Spirit of God in prayer ; his work is to guide and quicken you.

First, to guide you in prayer, that you may pray to God in a holy manner ; we know not what to pray for as we ought, on a four-fold reason ; [1.] As blinded with self-love ; [2.] As discomposed by trouble ; [3.] As struck dumb by guilt ; [4.] As straitened by barrenness and leanness of soul.

[1.] As blinded by self-love. Oh ! what strange prayers will men put up to God, if they take counsel of their lusts and interests ! as the disciples that called for fire from heaven ; Christ told them, 'Ye know not of what manner of spirit ye are of,' Luke ix. 55. Self-love so blindeth us that if we be led by it, we shall rather beg our ruin than our salvation ; for we know not what is either profitable or prejudicial to us ; so that it would be an argument of God's anger to grant our requests. The ambitious, if he should pray from the passion that possesseth him, would only ask honour and worldly greatness ; the covetous, only that God would double his worldly portion, and enlarge his estate according to his vast desires ; the sensual, the ability and opportunity of glutting his brutish inclinations ; the vindictive, that he may interest God in his quarrels ; all sinners would serve him only to serve their carnal turns. Whatever words we use to God in prayer, if we serve him to these ends, and

hope that by praying they shall be the better gratified, our prayer is turned into sin ; but he that is guided by the Spirit entreateth nothing of God but what is pleasing to him, and suiteth with his glory. We come to our Father which is in heaven when we pray ; and our welfare in the world must be subordinated to our eternal and heavenly estate. And we come in the name of Christ ; now to ask honours in his name who was born in a stable and died on a cross, pleasures in his name who was a man of sorrows, is utterly incongruous. No ; God's glory, kingdom, will, must be preferred before our inclinations ; other things asked with reservation and submission.

[2.] Our minds are discomposed by trouble, that we scarce know what to do or say : 2 Chron. xx. 12, ' Lord, we know not what to do, but our eyes are unto thee.' Our Lord Christ : John xii. 27, ' My soul is troubled, what shall I say ?' In great grief, Christ himself was at a loss ; the great teacher of the church, who hath so much to say for our comfort and counsel in such cases, yet was amazed, and at a nonplus ; and David, Ps. lxxvii. 4, ' I am sore troubled, I cannot speak.' Our words stoppeth the mouth. Now when our thoughts are thus confounded, we scarce know what to pray for ; the Spirit teacheth us what to say. Look, as in the case of the fear of men : Luke xii. 12, ' For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you shall say ;' so in our perplexities, when we are scarce able to open our mouths to God.

[3.] When struck dumb by some newly contracted guilt, as David kept silence and grew shy of God, Ps. xxxii. 3. The Spirit urgeth us to penitent confession and humble suing out our pardon, ver. 5, with that brokenness of heart which becometh a sinner.

[4.] When straitened by barrenness, and leanness of soul ; would fain pray, but are dry and barren of matter. It is because we use not meditation and serious recollection : Ps. xlv. 1, ' My heart is inditing a good matter, my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.' One that is well acquainted with God and himself cannot want matter. First, the Holy Ghost puts us upon the serious consideration of these things ; and then when we come to speak to God, a man will copiously enough be supplied out of the abundance of his heart : Mat. xii. 34, ' Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' If the mind be stocked and furnished with holy thoughts and meditation, it will break out in the lips.

2. His next office is to quicken you, or raise your affections and holy desires, which are the life of prayer. The prayer continueth no longer than the desires do ; therefore groans are more prayer than words. Weeping hath a voice : Ps. vi. 8, ' The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.' Tears have a tongue, and a language which God well enough understandeth. Look, as babes have no other voice but crying for the mother's breast, that is intelligible enough to the tender parent ; so when there are earnest and serious desires after grace, God knoweth our meaning.

Secondly, It informeth us that the motions of the Spirit are a help in prayer, not the rule and reason of prayer. Many will say they will pray only when the Spirit moveth them ; now he helpeth in the performance, not in the neglect of the duty. We are to make conscience

of it. God giveth out influences of grace according to his will or good pleasure; but we must pray according to his will of precept. The influence of grace is not the warrant of duty, but the help; we are to do all acts in obedience to God's command, whatever cometh of it, Luke v. 5. God is sovereign; disposed or indisposed, you are bound. Our impotency is our sin. Now our sin cannot excuse us from our duty, for then the creature were not culpable for his sinful defects and omissions. The outward act of a duty is commanded as well as the inward; though we cannot come up to the nature of a perfect duty, yet we should do as we can. *Tota actio*, and *totum actionis*, falleth under the command of God: Hosea xiv. 2, 'Take with you words;' ay, and also take with you affections. Though I cannot do all, I must do as much as I can, bring such desires as I have. God's Spirit is more likely to help you in duty, than in the neglect of it. You quench the Spirit that must assist you by neglecting the means; when the door is bolted, knocking is the only way to get it open. Present yourselves before God, and see what he will do for you. By tacking about, men get the wind, not by lying still; there is many times a supply cometh ere we are aware: Cant. vi. 11, 12, "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." We begin with much deadness and straitness; by striving against it, rather than yielding to it, we get enlargement afterwards; God assists those that will be doing what he commandeth; when we stir up ourselves, he is the more ready to help us.

Use 2. Is caution. See that your prayers come from the Spirit; there are some prayers it is a reproach to the Holy Spirit to father them upon him.

1. An idle and foolish loquacity. When men take a liberty to prattle anything in God's hearing, and pour out raw, tumultuous, and indigested thoughts before him: Eccles. v. 2, 'Be not hasty to utter anything before God;' it is a great irreverence and contempt of his majesty. Surely the Spirit is not the author of ignorant, senseless, and dull praying; nothing disorderly cometh from him. The heathen are charged with vain babbling and heartless repetitions: Mat. vi. 7, 'They think to be heard for their much speaking.' Shortness or length are both culpable, according to the causes from whence they come; shortness out of barrenness and straitness, or length out of affectation, or ingeminating the same thing, without savour or wisdom, or a mere filling up the time with words.

2. A frothy eloquence and affected language; as if the prayer were the more grateful to God, and he did accept men for their words rather than their graces, and were to be worshipped with fine phrases and quaint speeches. No, it is the humble exercise of faith, hope, and love, which he regardeth; and such art and curiosity is against God's sovereignty, and doth not suit with the gravity and seriousness of worship. If we would speak to God, we must speak with our hearts to him rather than our words; and the more plain and bare they are, the better they suit with the nature of duty. Moses was bid to put off his shoes in holy ground, to teach us to lay aside our ornaments when we humble ourselves before God. It is not words, but spirit and life; not a work of oratory, but filial affection. Too

much care of verbal eloquence showeth our hearts are more conversant with signs than things, words than matter; and it hath a smack of the man, and smelleth of the man, but savoureth not of the Spirit: Ps. cxix. 26, 'I declared my ways, and thou heardest me.'

3. Outward vehemency and loud speech. The heat which ariseth from the agitation of bodily spirits, and vehemency of speech, differeth from an inward affection, which is accompanied with reverence and child-like dependence upon God. It is not the loud noise of words which is best heard in heaven; the fervent affectionate cries of the saints are those of the heart, not of the tongue: Ps. x. 17, 'Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble;' and Ps. xxxviii. 9, 'O Lord, all my ways are before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.' The vehemency of the affection may sometimes cause the extension of the voice; but without it, we are but as tinkling cymbals.

4. Natural fervency, when instant and earnest for some kind of blessings, especially when we are oppressed with grievous evils, and would fain get rid of them; yet they cannot be looked upon as a motion of the Spirit; partly because it is the temporal inconvenience they mind more than the removal of sin; and cry more to get ease of their troubles than repentance for their sins which procured them; and the supply of their necessities which they mind, and not the favour of God; and therefore the Holy Ghost calleth it howling, Hos. vii. 14, like the moans of the beasts for ease. Partly because they have no more to do with God when their turns are served, and they are delivered from their troubles: Jer. ii. 27, 'In the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us;' Exod. x. 17, 'Entreat the Lord, that he may take away this death only;' so that all cometh from mere self-love. Partly because those relentings which they have for sin go not deep enough to divorce their hearts from it: Ps. lxxviii. 36, 37, 'Nevertheless, they did flatter with their mouth, and they lied to him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.' Even then, when they sought God right early, and remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer, the judgments of God had some slight effect upon them, reduced them to some degree of repentance and good behaviour and temper for a while; but all this while they were but like ice in yielding weather, thawed above, and hard at bottom. Partly because, if they pray for spiritual things, it is but a dictate of conscience awakened for the time, not the desires of a renewed heart, seconded with constant endeavours to obtain what we ask of God; and so, 'The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing,' Prov. xiii. 4; they are not urging desires that quicken to diligence.

But what prayers, then, come from the Spirit?

[1.] When there is something divine in them, such as are suited to the object to whom we pray, and looketh like worship relating to God; when it hath the stamp of his nature upon it. We apprehend in God two sort of attributes, some that belong to his mercy and goodness, some to his majesty and greatness. Now his mercy and goodness is seen in the joy of our faith and confidence, his majesty and greatness in our humility and reverence; both prompt us to serious worshipping.

[2.] When there is something beyond the work of our natural faculties; and prayer is not the fruit of memory and invention, but of faith, hope, and love. A man, by the help of memory and invention, may frame and utter a prayer which his heart disliketh.

[3.] Whatever prayers are according to the will of God: ver. 27, 'And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.'

Use 3. Is to exhort you to get this spirit of prayer and supplication.

1. Beg the Spirit of God from his fatherly love: Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?'

2. Beg it as purchased by Christ; as one of his disciples, as one that hath consented to the covenant of grace, which is a dutiful and obediential acceptance of Christ Jesus as our alone remedy. So doth Paul pray for it: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' So doth God offer it.

3. Obey the Spirit in other things, and then he will help you in prayer: Rom. viii. 14, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.' That implieth that he not only directs, but we follow his direction; therefore make it your business to obey his motions when he would restrain you from sin: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' When he inviteth and leadeth you into communion with God, which is called by the apostle walking in the Spirit, Gal. v. 25, obey him speedily, for delay is a plausible denial; thoroughly doing all that he requireth of you constantly, not sometimes only, when generally you neglect him. The Spirit is a stranger to you in prayer, when you neglect his other motions. There is a grieving the Spirit: Eph. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption;' a resisting the Spirit: Acts vii. 51, 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost;' and there is a quenching the Spirit: 1 Thes. v. 19, 'Quench not the Spirit.'

4. Do not pride thyself with the assistance he giveth: Ps. xci. 15, 'He shall call upon me, and I will answer him, and will be with him in trouble, and I will deliver him.' Simon Magus would fain have the power to work miracles: Acts viii. 19, 'And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.'