inability to pray aright, which is merely  
an *example* of it, but (*general weakness*):  
**for** (example of the help above mentioned ;  
—‘for *this*, viz. what to, &c.’) **we know  
not what we should pray for as we ought**  
(two things ;—*what* we should pray,—the  
*matter* of our prayer ;—and *how* we should  
pray for it,—the *form* and *manner* of our  
prayer): **but the Spirit itself** (Tholuck  
remarks,—“ The addition of **itself** brings  
into more prominence the idea of the  
Spirit, so as to express of what dignity our  
Intercessor is,—an Intercessor who knows  
best what our wants are”) **maketh   
intercession** [**for us**]   
(these words are omitted  
in most of our ancient authorities) **with  
groanings which cannot be uttered** :—  
i.e. the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in  
us, knowing our wants better than we,  
Himself pleads in our prayers, raising us  
to higher and holier desires than we can  
express in words, which can only find  
utterance in sighings and aspirations : see  
next verse. Chrysostom interprets the words  
of the spiritual gift of prayer,and adds, “For  
the man who is granted this grace, standing  
praying in great earnestness, supplicating  
God with many mental groanings, asks  
what is good for all.” Calvin understands,  
that the Spirit suggests to us the proper  
words of acceptable prayer, which would  
*otherwise have been unutterable by us.*  
Macedonius gathered from this verse that  
the Holy Spirit is *a creature*, and *inferior  
to God*, because He *prays to God for us*.  
But as Augustine remarks, “The Holy  
Spirit groans not in Himself, with Himself,  
in the Holy Trinity, but *in us*, in that He  
makes us to groan.” No *intercession in  
heaven* is here spoken of, but a *pleading  
in us* by the indwelling Spirit, of a nature  
above our comprehension and utterance.  
  
  
**27.**] **but** (opposed to the words  
“*which cannot be uttered* :” the groanings  
‘are indeed unutterable by us, but. . .)  
**He that searcheth the hearts** (God)   
**knoweth what is the mind** (*intent*, or *bent*,  
as hidden in those sighs) **of the Spirit**. A  
difficulty presents itself in the rendering  
of the next clause. The particle with  
which it opens may mean either **because**,  
or **that**. If it is to be *causal*, **because  
He** (the Spirit) **pleads for the saints   
according to the will of God**, it would seem  
that **knows** must bear the meaning   
*‘approves,’* otherwise the connexion will not  
be apparent; and so Calvin and others  
have rendered it. Hence many render it  
**that**, — ‘*knows what is the mind of the  
Spirit, that He pleads, &c. with* (or,   
according to) *God*.’ But I must confess that  
the other rendering seems to me better to  
suit the context: and I do not see that the  
ordinary meaning of the word **knoweth**  
need be changed. The assurance which  
we have that God the Heart-Searcher  
interprets the inarticulate sighings of the  
Spirit in us,—is not, strictly speaking, His  
Omniscience,—but *the fact that the very  
Spirit who thus pleads, does it* according  
to God,—in pursuance of the divine purposes   
and in conformity with God’s good  
pleasure.—All these pleadings of the Spirit  
are heard and answered, even when   
*inarticulately uttered*: we may extend the  
same comforting assurance to the   
*imperfect and mistaken verbal utterances* of our  
prayers, which are not themselves answered  
to our hurt, but the answer is given to the  
voice of the Spirit which speaks through  
them, which we *would* express, but *cannot*.  
Compare 2 Cor. xii. 7–10, for an instance in  
the Apostle’s own case.   
  
**28.**] Having  
given an example in *prayer*, how the  
Spirit *helps our weakness*, and out of our  
ignorance and discouragement brings from  
God an answer of peace, he now extends  
this to *all things*—all circumstances by  
which the Christian finds himself   
surrounded. These may seem calculated to