view. In this view he goes still further  
in the next verse).

**15.**] **And if we  
know that He heareth us whatsoever we  
ask** (i.e. our every petition: the condition  
is omitted this time, as being supposed to  
be fulfilled), **we know that we have the  
petitions** (i.e. the things which form the  
subject of the petitions) **which we have  
asked from Him** (notice the present, **we  
have**, combined with the perfect, **we have  
asked.** The perfect reaches through all  
our past prayers to this moment. All  
these we **have**: not one of them is lost:  
He has heard, He has answered them all:  
we know that we have them in the truest  
sense, in possession).

**16, 17.**] Join together the confidence  
concerning prayer just expressed, and the  
all-essential Christian principle of brotherly  
love, and we have following as matter of  
course, the duty, and the practice, of intercession   
for an erring brother. And of  
this, with a certain not strictly defined  
limitation, these verses treat. **If any man  
see** (on any occasion: *“shall have seen”*)  
**his brother** (as throughout the Epistle, to  
be taken in the stricter sense: not any  
neighbour, but his Christian brother, one  
born of Ged as he is himself) **sinning**  
(this present participle is net merely predicative,   
but graphic, as describing the ‘brother’   
actually in the act and under the  
bondage of the sin in question) **a sin not  
unto death** (see below), **he shall ask** (the  
future conveys not merely a permission to  
ask, “it shall be lawful for him to ask,”—  
but a command, taking for granted the  
thing enjoined as that which is to happen),  
**and shall give him life** (viz. the *asker*  
shall give: not, as many have understood  
it, *God* shall give him life, though of  
course this is so in reality: but the words  
mean, he, interceding for his brother, shall  
be the means of bestowing life on him.  
This bestowal of life by intercessory  
prayer, is not to be minutely enquired  
into, whether it is to be accompanied with  
fraternal rebuke,—whether it consists in  
the giving to the sinner a repentant heart,  
but taken as put by the Apostle, in  
all its simplicity and breadth. *Life*, viz.  
the restoration of that divine life from  
which by any act of sin he was indeed in  
peril and indeed in process of falling, but  
his sin was not an actual fall) **for them  
that sin not unto death** (the clause takes  
up and emphatically repeats the hypothesis  
before made, viz., that the sin of the brother   
is not unto death. It does so in the  
plural, because the **him** before being indefinite,   
all such cases are now collected in a  
class: “shall give this life, I repeat, to  
those who sin not unto death”). **There  
is a sin unto death: concerning it I do  
not say that he should make request**  
(leaving for the present the great question,  
I will touch the minor points in this verse.  
First, it necessarily by the conditions of  
the context involves what is equivalent to  
a prohibition. This has been denied by  
many Commentators. “Ask if thou wilt, but  
in uncertainty of obtaining,” says Cornelius-a-lapide.   
And it is equally denied,  
without the same implied meaning being  
given, by many others: some of these, as  
Neander, thinking it implied, that prayer  
may be made, though the obtaining of it  
will be difficult,—others, as De Wette, that  
it will be in vain, others, as Huther, that  
St.John simply says such a case was not  
within his view in making the above command.   
And most of even these who have  
recognized the prohibition, strive to soften  
it, saying, as e.g. Lyra, that though “we  
are not to pray for the condemned,” yet we  
may pray for such a sinner, “that he may  
sin less, and so be less condemned in hell:”  
or as Bengel, “God willeth not that the