

knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7).

Having the word of Christ that "we ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1), we need not greatly concern ourselves about the objections that are urged against prayer by unbelievers. Christians have been taunted since the present war broke out with praying on opposite sides, with conflicting intentions. As if the children of the same Father on falling out, may not together appeal to His tribunal! For the rest, we are so confident of being in the right, that it is as easy, as it is eminently proper, for us to pray that the right may prevail. If those who oppose us, and who are our enemies in this war, but brethren in Christ, pray only for victory, and not that the right may triumph, we are quite sure their prayer will not be heard. But if they, in good faith, believe they are in the right, and pray for the success of their cause, God will grant them, not indeed what they ask, but something better. For no prayer, said "in faith, not wavering" (James 1:6) is ever offered in vain.

It is sometimes said: "Where is the sense of making your needs known to God, when He knows them already?" This is wholly to misconceive the meaning and purpose of prayer. Of course God knows our needs beforehand, but it is not at all to make our needs known that we pray. We pray because He in His wisdom has seen fit to make prayer the condition of our getting what we ask. The law that He has laid down is: "Ask, and you shall receive." He had many good reasons for laying down this law, but even if we were not able to see one of them, we should still be bound to obey.

God will have every creature act according to its nature, and what more natural for the man who wants something than to go and ask for it of him who has it? Again, we owe God worship, and prayer is worship. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise always to God, that is to say, the fruit of lips confessing to His name" (Heb. 13:15). The very act and posture of prayer is an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God and a showing of reverence to Him.

But there is a deeper reason why we must pray. Prayer is the very breath of the spiritual life in man. Just as we know that the man who has ceased to breathe is dead, so we may know that the life of the soul is gone out of him who has ceased to pray. Only by faith and baptism can we get the spiritual life. Once gotten, it has to be kept up by prayer. Herbert Spencer has