

with God, we acknowledge that His wisdom and love and decision must ever be better than anything we can ask, either for others or ourselves.

Let us repeat these seven elements, so that they may ever be remembered—adoration, thanksgiving, penitence, resolution, petition, intercession, submission. If we would speak of prayer truthfully, we must mean all these. They can, indeed, be all put into one term. We may speak of them altogether as "communion with God," and prayer, to be prayer, is never less than that. This, then, is the first misconception here; viz., the representation of a part as the whole—and that part, you will observe, isolated from the whole. But is there any man who will wish to shake hands with a hand that is severed from the body? I trow not. No more have we anything to do in our Christian thought and life with "begging," as the writer quoted puts it, isolated from all the other living members that go to make up the reality of prayer.

Again, concerning the Fatherhood. What is it that is represented here—"To pray to God is to insult Him"? What! to commune with a father to insult him! Is that how our children insult us? Is there any fatherhood worth naming, is there any sonship that can ever deserve to be called such, which does not necessarily involve communion between the father and the child? Does any father wish his son never to commune with him, never to ask him for anything, never prefer any request, never show any loving gratitude, never to come to him in trouble or in difficulty? Surely not. Yet if ever in any unhappy home such an attitude is found, there is only one word by which it can be expressed. And that is to say that it is in the highest sense utterly unnatural. Everywhere and always the only natural relation between real father-

hood and real sonship is communion. Therefore the rightfulness and the naturalness of prayer can only be demonstrated by demonstrating first, either the non-existence or the non-fatherhood of God. These two subjects we do not now discuss. I am warranted now in taking them for granted, and so long as it is true that God is, and is our Father, so long is it the most natural, and the only natural, thing that we can do, to enter into communion with Him.

Now, in the same way that misrepresentation lies at the base of that first difficulty, so is it at the root of all the others. To say that prayer is unscientific is to misrepresent both science and prayer. To assert that prayer and praise are unworthy is to misrepresent their true significance no less than our human nature; to suggest that it is unavailing is to misrepresent hosts of real, palpable, practical facts. Now, to do justice to all these points to-day, would take more time than we have at our disposal. We must confine ourselves, therefore, to those difficulties or objections which appear to deserve most consideration.

Is Prayer Unscientific.

It is said that petition is a definite part of prayer, and in so far as prayer is petition, so far is it unscientific. But why? Here we must be very careful. What is really meant when it is said that prayer is "unscientific"? The general answer is, that a direct answer to prayer would involve an "interference" with those laws of nature by which our whole being is surrounded and penetrated; that these make any such answer impossible. Is it so? Is it really true that the uniformity of nature, the invariability, the inviolability of law, are so established beyond question, in modern science, as to