

THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

THE *Irish Messenger* in its instruction on prayer points out the difference between prayer as we commonly regard it, and the spirit of prayer. Very usually, by prayer, we understand the vocal prayers we say or join in, as, for example, our morning and night prayers, the rosary, and other devotional prayers. In contradistinction to these verbal forms of prayer, the spirit of prayer, rather implies a frame of mind or devout existence of a soul that consciously or unconsciously lives in God and for God — frequently runs to Him as the center of its existence, its beginning and its last end — is united to Him by grace — feels that its indisputable obligation is to refer all to Him, to live, to work, to die for Him, and to make all other interests secondary to His service. Such a soul feels sweetly but powerfully constrained to have frequent recourse to prayer. This inclination begets frequency, the frequency gives facility, and the facility is rewarded by constant currents of Divine grace enabling it to surmount obstacles otherwise seemingly insuperable. Gradually it realizes how absolutely true is the promise of our Blessed Lord: "Whatsoever you ask the Father in My Name, He will give it to you." As a consequence it flies to prayer in all sorrow, or difficulty, with the unquestioning confidence of a feeble or frightened little child to its mother. Hence, too, it steeps everything in prayer — the woof and web of daily thought, word and work, it dyes with the hues of prayer. It begins nothing, continues nothing, and ends nothing without prayer. "Through God, with God, and in God," all things must commence and terminate with Him and for Him. Under this influence of prayer the least thing possesses infinite value — without God, the whole universe does not count even as a grain of sand. So, too, through prayer it confidently hopes for everything, even should a miracle be needed. "Everything you ask for in prayer, believing you shall receive," Matt. xxi. Nor does this unwavering confidence extend to personal needs only, or exceptionally,