

friend may make ; and if that be so, is there any absurdity in supposing that the will of the highest intelligence, to whom all things are subservient, may not employ these laws in answering his people's prayers ? Thus, the whole question about the possibility of the answering of prayer resolves itself into one as to the existence of God. If there be no God ; or if, as seems to be the case with many in these days, that term is merely employed as a fine name for the universe, which they speak of as He only by courtesy, then prayer is vanity. But if there be one omnipotent and gracious being who is God over all, and to whom men can come as to a father, then prayer to him is as appropriate as are children's requests to their father, and God is as able to answer petitions as the human father is to give good things to the prattler that sits upon his knee.

It is impossible to take up any section of the great subject of prayer without pausing a little upon the threshold to take the measure of the objections which have been made in these days to offering it at all. But the purpose is to look particularly at the conditions which in the Word of God have been laid down as essential to the success of petitions. In the passage which may be called the Christian's prayer charter, one is struck with the unqualified universality of the terms involved. It is as follows : " Ask and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you ; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Nor does it stand alone in this respect ; for in his farewell address to his followers Jesus said, " And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." " If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it."

But many say, " We have asked and we have not received ; we have sought and we have not found ; we have knocked and it has not been opened to us." What shall be answered to that ? Must it be admitted that God has been unfaithful to his promise ? Is it so that he has not kept his word ? Nay, for these are not the only words he has spoken on this subject ; and