

demonstrates the naturalness of such a thing as prayer. This, then, is one of the answers which, without opening the Bible at all, may be given to those who cast reproach on prayer. They are ignoring the yearnings of the human heart. In their investigation of nature everywhere else they have forgotten the nature which is in themselves and their fellow-man. They have swept the human universe with their telescopic examination, but they have neglected to take note of the observatory on which they stood and to make allowance for the personal equation, and it may be said to them, that either the nature within them is a lie, and in that an exception to nature everywhere else, or it is a right thing to pray ; that either men's hearts are misled by their deepest, holiest, and most constant instincts, or there is one above able and willing to help, and to whom man may fly in his times of need.

But while seeming to assent to all of this, there are some who say, "It is, of course, a right thing to pray, but you must not expect to receive the material blessing for which you ask ; all the benefit you will receive will be subjective in the bringing of your heart into a better and more peaceful state." Thus they make the reflex influence of supplication on the petitioner the direct and only good result of prayer. Now, it is not denied that prayer has such an effect upon the soul. Every real suppliant has experienced this to such a degree that he can appropriate the words of Trench :

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour,
Spent in thy presence, will prevail to make!"

We kneel, and all around us seem to lower,
We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!"

But when have men received such benefits from their prayers? It has been when they have been the most simple and sincere in the belief that God could and would give them the very things which they were seeking. Thus the subjective benefits of prayer depend on the belief in its objective power. How long will men continue to ask blessings, if they suppose that the only