

We should also feel that God was very near to us. With too many of us prayer is an appeal to God, who is "afar off." We cry to Him out of the depths of a great darkness. Our cry is the cry of despair rather than of trust. He listens even to this. But if He came to us as He comes to the Church when it is filled with the Holy Ghost, we should speak to Him with a freedom, with a joy, and with a confidence, which as yet, perhaps, many of us have never known.

Above all, a Revival of Religion would create throughout the Church that sense of absolute dependence on the power and grace of God which is the indispensable condition both of earnest prayer and of effective spiritual work. It is in this, as it seems to me, that we are chiefly defective. The very machinery which we have created for the evangelisation of the world comes between us and the living God. A physician, if he knows his profession, will treat his patients successfully whether he has a devout trust in God or not. The builder can rely on the known properties of stone and iron and wood. It is not necessary to pray in order to secure the action of the law of gravitation. Natural forces are uniform in their operation. Fire always burns; friction always creates heat; cold always freezes. But in those provinces in which the Church has to work we have to deal not with natural, but with supernatural forces; not with unvarying laws, but with Divine volitions. The regeneration of every individual soul is of the nature of a miracle. It is not the natural effect of the presentation or apprehension of Truth. The direct action of the Spirit of God is indispensable. It is only as the promise of Christ, "Lo, I am with you alway," is fulfilled that any words of ours can produce any spiritual effect. In a time of Religious Revival, the Church has a vivid sense of the supernatural character of all spiritual work, and assumes naturally and habitually that relationship of dependence upon God in the absence of which it would seem to be contrary to a law of the divine kingdom that the Divine presence and power should be revealed. As the true life of the Church is a "life of faith," its work, to be effective, must be a "work of faith." It may be that of late years Christ has been unable to do any "mighty works" among us "because of our unbelief."

But if faith in Him returned—and it would return if the Spirit of God were poured out upon us—we should see once more that the Gospel is still the very power of God unto salvation, and instead of the doubtful struggle which for forty or fifty years we have been maintaining with the sin and irreligion of the country, thousands and tens of thousands would be "pricked to the heart," would cry out "What must we do to be saved?" and, acknowledging Christ as Prince and Saviour, would receive from Him the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life.—*The Congregationalist*.

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