

manifestations which were formerly considered, to say the least, preternatural. The blunder we commit is the drawing of an illegitimate inference. Because certain extraordinary phenomena on fuller knowledge turn out to be natural, it does not follow that there are no supernatural phenomena; what does follow is that we should be more careful before pronouncing a judgment in future. Because, with the help of nature, we can do many more wonderful things than our grandfathers could, it does not follow that we have acquired a natural right to supernatural results. Between the natural and the supernatural there is still, as there always has been and ever will be, a great gulf fixed. That gulf can be bridged by grace alone. "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; for it is the gift of God." (1) Even our thoughts cannot turn efficaciously heavenward without divine assistance: "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." (2) As to speech, "No man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost." (3) And as to deeds, "It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish according to his good will." (4)

Now, apart from the sacraments, the way to obtain this most necessary actual grace is to pray for it. "If any of you want wisdom," i. e. supernatural discernment or grace, "let him ask of God." (5) "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." (6) Strive and strain as we may in natural efforts, we can never by those efforts obtain supernatural grace. That comes only from above. We who are below cannot reach up to it and take it by force. Hence the absolute, the inevitable, the elementary necessity of prayer.

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(1) Eph. ii, 8.

(2) 2 Cor. iiii, 5.

(3) 1 Cor. xii, 8.

(4) Phil. ii, 13.

(5) Jas. i, 5.

(6) Matt. xxi, 22.