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ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS

By Edward Oliver Taplin,
Pillar of Prophets,
1833

NINE LECTURES ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS

BY
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PILLAR OF PROPHETS, 1833

PART I. 1.COR: XII, XIII & XIV.

“Concerning spiritual gifts, I would not have you ignorant”; and yet there is nothing in which we and all the Church have been so ignorant even from the beginning.

It is my desire, as far as God may enable me, to remove this ignorance.

And first let us enquire, what are the things which the Apostle includes in these “Spirituals” ? If you read carefully the whole of the 12th Chapter you will see that he includes under this one head three distinct things, viz., Gifts, Administrations (or Ministries), and Operations.

The Gifts he says are various and diversified but are from One and the self-same Spirit. There are also differences in the Ministries, and they are from the One and self-same Lord. And there are diversities of Operations, but it is the self-same God Who worketh all in all. The Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, are the active and co-active A-

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BEERFELDEN JULII 2004

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Agents, therefore, over these realities which St. Paul calls “Spirituals”.

Moreover, while there are these three forms or modes of Divine Agency in the spirituals of the Church, it is not to be supposed for one moment that such distinctions imply separations; for neither in their actings in the Infinite, nor in the finite economy of the Church, can there be any act of One of the Divine Persons in which the other Two do not co-act, and co-operate, and fully participate; although there are, and must be, distinctions in their Personal Agencies and activities. And so the Spirit is the distinct Agent in giving Spiritual Gifts; the Lord in giving Spiritual Ministries; and the Father working in Spiritual Operations.

And why are these distinct forms of Divine Agency and grace called especially “Spirituals”? It is no doubt because they are each and all the consequence of that Divine inspiration of God in the spirits, hearts and minds of regenerated and anointed men which is the abiding result of Divine inhabitation: i.e. of God Almighty dwelling and working in the Church and in all her members as the one Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Ghost: so that, while it is one indwelt and inspired whole, each member also is indwelt and inspired for specific ends and purposes. Therefore, I apprehend, they are called “Spirituals”, in

order that they may be clearly distinguished from all other things that are merely human, natural, moral or mental. I say merely human, natural, moral or mental to indicate that while they are not annihilated, or destroyed in spirituals, yet it is God Almighty by spiritual, supernatural inspiration acting in, with, by and through the same and making them spiritual.

The first named class of “Spirituals” then are “diversities of gifts”, which are given to the various members of Christ by the One and selfsame Spirit, the Holy Ghost. And it is to this first class that I call your attention. But let me first point out wherein consists the difference between what are called Gifts, Ministries, and Operations.

A Spiritual Gift is a supernatural, impersonal power, communicated and used by the Holy Ghost; whereas a Spiritual Ministry is a supernatural function - an office; and a Spiritual Operation is an inwrought supernatural virtue. They embrace together, therefore, powers, offices and graces, and these three, although distinct and not to be mingled nor confounded, are needful and necessary for the common edification and growth and perfection of the Church as the One Mystical Body of Christ. And to say that one or more of them is useless, or unnecessary, is to call in question the wisdom and goodness of the Blessed Being who gave them all at first, gave them

without repentance, and therefore never has withdrawn nor can withdraw them, nor taken them away.

Returning to Spiritual Gifts, let us still more accurately define what is the true nature of a spiritual gift, as distinguished from Spiritual Ministries and Operations.

A Spiritual Gift is some impersonal capacity or power communicated and energised by the Holy Ghost, and which has its basis in the original nature of the person who is indwelt thereby. And first observe that it has its basis in nature. God in the new creation destroys nothing in the old but sin and its effects. Regeneration does not destroy man's former nature - spiritual, mental or physical - nor any of the essential powers and attributes thereto appertaining; but He communicates new Spiritual, Heavenly and Divine Life to the already [02] existing creature, and by means of this new life the man (with all he is and possesses) is changed, quickened, sanctified, and made over anew. And thus, by the supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost, the powers which were once natural can be transmuted, translated into a state and condition which is entirely above nature, and fitted for activities and operations which are heavenly, spiritual and divine.

Second. While a Spiritual Gift has its primary basis in nature, yet it is also a power or capacity which is above nature, being communicated and energised by the Holy Ghost who dwells in the anointed man: that primary capacity or power which has its origin in nature the Holy Ghost changes, transforming and quickening into a supernatural condition, and fills with a spiritual energy and a heavenly force or power for which reason it becomes, here and now, one of the powers of the world to come: a power which anticipates the resurrection: a celestial power which indicates and manifests here on earth those perfect powers which the Church shall possess and exercise in the glory and immortality of the resurrection; in which condition the complete nature of man - spirit, soul and body - shall be penetrated and pervaded by the Holy Ghost who is the essence of the Church's power and glory. What the bodies of the Saints will realise in the glory of the resurrection man is made to realise in the capacities and powers of his spiritual nature, even before he attains to that power and glory in his body.

Third. All spiritual gifts are impersonal powers and are distinct both from the Person of the Giver and of the receiver. They are powers entrusted by the Person of the indwelling Spirit - the Giver - to the exercise of the persons who receive them. A spiritual gift is distinguishable from both, because when it is given

it is distinct from both. A spiritual gift is not the Holy Ghost, nor is it the person of a man. A gift is not a person either in order of nature or of grace.

Fourth. Though a spiritual gift is distinct from both the Giver and the receiver yet it is not to be separated from either. It is a gift possessed by a man, for the right exercise of which he is always personally responsible; but at the same time it is a gift given by the Person of the Holy Ghost in and to the man: given for his sole use and agency, and no other person or power whatsoever has any right to use but the Person of the Holy Ghost Himself. The man is the passive, willing agent¹ in its use and exercise, and the Holy Ghost is the actively willing Agent in its use and exercise. Man consents and yields: the Holy Ghost moves and impels, but never compels.

Fifth. A spiritual gift is given by the Holy Ghost to be used by Himself alone, when and where He will. A gift is given to each severally according to the sovereign will of Him "Who divideth to every man severally as He will". Being originally His gift He gives it for His own services and use, and for the use and service of no one else. The continuous² user of the gift ought solely and wholly to be He who originally bestowed it.

¹ Script: agant

² Script: continous

It is not given for the possessor to use when and how he will. It is not given to be under the influence, impulse or control of any other person but the Holy Ghost, the Giver. He, and He alone, ought to have the right, the authority and the power over it as His special possession in the man, to be used or not as He wills. All active power in and over it belongs wholly and solely to Him, and to Him alone.

Sixth. In the exercise of a spiritual gift the receiver is always a passive, voluntary, responsible agent. Wheresoever the Spirit of the Lord is in His active operations in, with, and towards man, there is always on man's part most true and perfect liberty. Man's freedom is seen not only in active volition, but also in passive volition. He is never overborne, coerced, compelled or forced in opposition to his will by any agency or operation of the Holy Ghost. He is never treated as a mere brute, much less as a living machine, for that would be to utterly unmake him by unmanning him; for man bereft of the power voluntarily to dispose of himself ceases to be man. The Holy Ghost in His highest form of inspired action in man always conserves, maintains and consults the liberty of the will in man. He is no tyrant who seeks to obtain the services of compulsion; so, being left in exercise of perfect freedom, the receiver of a spiritual gift remains capable of consenting to or refusing to the Holy Ghost the use of His gift. He retains power to restrain its ex-

ercise, to prevent and misuse it altogether; yea, even, by sinful neglect of it, to forfeit and lose it altogether.

Seventh. A spiritual gift is a distribution, a dividing, of that fulness of power which resides in Christ and the Church and has a definite, partial and specific end and purpose. Like the various vessels of a living body, each having power to secrete and appropriate for the whole body specific vital energies, and which fulfils only that purpose – that specific purpose – and no [03] other; so also each class of spiritual gifts is for a definite vital object in and towards the One Mystical Body of Christ, and they cannot be misappropriated or inverted in their use without³ danger, loss and decay. Each has its own specific calibre and measure in power, in grace, and in usefulness, and no other and no more.

All are for the exercise of God, and for the blessing of His Church; and in whatever way they edify the individual this is but an incidental benefit, and not the primary object for which they are bestowed. While the Ever-Blessed Spirit Himself personally admits of no division or admeasurement; yet in the communication of those spiritual powers and capacities which He deigns to inspire and use in the Body of Christ, He divides or measures out Christ's fullness "to each one

³ Script: with out

severally as He will". The knowledge and understanding of these distinctions and characteristics in spirituals in general, by spiritual gifts in particular, will be found to solve many a difficulty and remove many an error, and correct many a mistake. They will enable us to give to Spiritual Gifts their true place and usefulness in the Body of Christ, connected, as they are, so closely with the Ministries and Operations. They will deliver us from an undue superstitious exaltation of them on the one hand, or an undue despising of them on the other. They will bring those who possess them in any measure to see more clearly wherein their true responsibility lies, and their right exercise and use. They will enable us all to learn wherein the perfection or imperfection of any gift lies, so as to give God the glory of all that is perfect, and to the creature the infirmity or fault of all that is imperfect in the use and exercise of them, or defectiveness therein.

PART II. DIVINE AGENCY AND ACTION IN MAN.

From the fact that gifts are under the special agency of the Holy Ghost; that Ministries are under the special agency of the Lord; and that the Operations are under the special agency of the Eternal Father; we learn three important facts concerning the general nature and character of all Divine Agency and action in man.

First. The first thing is that, in the finite actings of the Godhead in and towards the Church, each of the Divine Persons has specific relations and definite functions to fulfil which belong to that Person alone, and not to the others, so far as active personal agency is concerned: e.g. the Father personally remains forever the unsent One, and the Sender of both the Son and the Spirit. The Son alone personally became Incarnate, and forever so remains. The Holy Ghost alone became the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. And yet, inasmuch as⁴ each Person by Himself is both God and Lord the whole Godhead, as to the Substance, wholly acts in each, and in the whole of the actings of the Sacred Three as One.

⁴ Script: inasmuch as as

God in the Person of the Father remains alone the unsent Sender; God in the Person of the Son becomes and forever remains the Incarnate Sent One; God in the Person of the Holy Ghost everlastingly proceeds from Both for effecting the Divine will and purpose in the Mystical Body of Christ.

Second. The second fact is that while each Person of the Divine Persons has thus His own specific agency and function to fulfil towards the Body of Christ, yet that each is vitally co-active in, with and through the activities of the other Two; so that there is no personal relative schism or separation in the acts which the other personally fulfils. Distinction in their personal acts excludes all real or even ideal independence or inco-operativeness. There can be no independence or isolation in the actings of that Being who is absolutely a Unity, or who can only act as a Unity; therefore co-action in all things must exist in the Godhead, although each Person has His own distinct agency and office to fulfil.

Third. The third thing is that inasmuch as the Holy Trinity are One in essence, though distinct in Their personal modes of subsistence and actions in that essence, and that therefore all must act and co-act in, with and by the other; yet, nevertheless, inasmuch as the Divine Substance or essence is one and indivisible, and wholly possessed in indivisibility by

each, it is also the truth that the whole Godhead does what each Person does, and this arises from the indivisibility of that substance which each Person possesses. The co-essential and co-substantial Trinity is actively present in the presence and active agency of each of the Divine Persons. This truth is called by the Doctors of the medieval times of the Church 'circumincession', i.e., an active going forth of the whole Trinity in each Person, and of each Person in the whole Trinity. In each and all of the Divine Actings there will always exist, first, Personal distinct Agency; second, Inseparable co-activity and co-operation; thirdly, Absolute Essential Unity – unity of the One Living Being who is the One and Only [04] God, who acts in, with and by the Three Persons, and who in three distinct actings are One Living God. The practical consequence of this circumincession in each and all of the Divine actings in the Church clearly shows that it is impossible for the Holy Ghost to be actively present in and with the Church as a whole, or any of Her members in particular, without the Persons of the Father and of the Son being also actively present in, with and through Him. This explains all those wonderful promises of Our Lord in the Gospel of St. John (XIV. 10, 21-23) where He says, on promising the Holy Ghost in His coming to dwell in men, that both He and the Father would also come to dwell in and remain present with them. Moreover this explains the fact that in the personal and substantial indwelling of

the Holy Ghost in the Church and Her members both the Father and the Son in, with and by Him do likewise mysteriously, but yet really, also come and indwell the same.

Both the Father and the Son do, in an ineffable way, dwell in each one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. And, moreover, both the Father and the Son make themselves present in, with and by the Holy Ghost to do their distinctive personal work towards each member in particular and the whole Church in the Living Mystical Body. The Eternal Father is present in each member, and in the whole Body, to be the Giver, Conserver, and Perfecter of that life eternal which is the portion and inheritance of each and all, and therefore His distinctive personal agency is in and over the activities of Eternal Life: the operations, the inworking, the lively virtues and fruits which are produced by the activities of Eternal Life, reducible as those are to faith, hope and love. The eternal Son as the glorified God-Man is present in each and all as the Minister to and the substance of that life, and therefore His distinctive personal agency as the Head and Substance of Ministry: of ministry which provides for, nourishes and exercises life in all its external and internal functions. And the Eternal Spirit is present in each and in all to be the Endower and Glorifier of that life so given and exercised; and therefore His dis-

inctive personal agency is put forth in the communication of gifts which are powers of the world to come.

How awfully mysterious then is the being and substance of an anointed Christian; of a creature in whom God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, have actually come to dwell and abide personally and substantially for ever! It might well be said, "Ye are the Temple of the living God" and, "Be ye holy, for I am holy".

Truly this manner of love passes beyond all human knowledge, imagination and conception. It transcends every idea which we could ever have entertained of the counsels of God towards His creatures, even had they remained in their created innocence and goodness; but how much more when we remember what we are, and what we have been! To be the Temples of the Living God, of the Ever-Blessed and Holy Trinity, and that, too, in spirit, soul and body for ever and ever! This is so wonderful and so high that we can never understand it. It surpasses all knowledge, and we can only fall down, worship and adore in silence, awe and wonder, a mystery that is so far beyond our finite thought and conception.

The Holy Scriptures declare that the regenerated members of Christ are in Him created anew. This is not an unreal figure of speech; it is a real, literal, vital

fact. It is a fact, however, which needs to be well discriminated and defined or it would lead to many erroneous consequences and results. God does not create us anew by destroying what we were and what we possessed in the old creature. He is never a destroyer of aught⁵ but sin and its effects. New creation must therefore be a change of the old into the new by a super-addition of higher powers, energies and perfections, which change by super-addition is the special work of God in all His activities in the order and Kingdom of His grace. All we were ; all we possessed in the old creation (which became a ruin) has been redeemed back again to God and made clean for His use and service by the Atoning Blood and Redeeming Love of His Own Dear Son.

But regeneration is a carrying upwards and forwards of the redeemed creation into a heavenly condition and vocation, and then the endowing of the regenerate with that which is the essence of that which is heavenly power and glory, even the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. In this light, therefore, all in man that has been redeemed is, in the Kingdom of grace, regenerated in order that it may be glorified. And these three stages are only rising degrees of perfection by superadded grace into which the original creature of God is carried forward. All the powers and faculties

⁵ aught - old use: anything

thereof originally in man by nature, whether of spirit, soul or body, are by regeneration thus elevated and changed into higher uses and endowed with higher perfections and powers. They were originally only earthly; now they are made capable of becoming heavenly. They were only natural; now they become super-natural. They were fleshly; now they become spiritual. It is the same original body of man which became death-stricken and [05] corrupt which shall be changed and raised up in glory and power. It is the same soul and spirit which became so carnal and earthly that by the grace of God become spiritual and heavenly. All their powers and faculties become, with them, fitted for receiving and exercising all the powers of the world to come.

Therefore it is that the old creature in the regenerate man - spirit, soul and body with all their attributes, capabilities and powers - is the basis and substratum on which the new creation rests, and from which it rises; with which it will be for ever identified, and yet from which man is changed and carried forward and upward into a state of perfection in the totality of his being, which as far surpasses his present state as heaven does the earth: the spiritual, the sensible; the supernatural, the natural: or the Divine, the human. And herein we are able to trace the order of Divine operations. First: Creation and ruin. Second: Redemption and Sanctification from ruin. Third: Re-

generation of the redeemed and sanctified. Forth: The Glorification of the regenerate. All this is even now in the Church in her members in the degree and measure of an earnest and firstfruits, and will be fully accomplished and verified at the appearing of Our Lord when the whole man - spirit, soul and body - becomes by regeneration and anointing of the Holy Ghost a new creature, because of the effects of a new creation (fiats). And yet this new creation is linked to, conserves and carries forward the old and destroys nothing in it but sin and its effect. The process of change began first in our spirit or inner man at our baptism; it goes onward in the gradual renewing of our minds and will be complete in the resurrection and change of this mortal body into a body of glory and immortality, when the whole man will be a completely changed, new-created man. Meanwhile, as St. Paul says, "We all with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed by the Spirit of the Lord". How wonderful is this process of change, affecting, as it does, all the attributes, powers and faculties of spirit, soul and body, wherein is to be found the basis and superstructure of all that is super-natural in the Church of God.

PART III. WHY NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE FOUND IN SUPERNATURAL GIFTS.

In the fact that the old creature is the basis of the new we have the true reason why so large an element of what is natural, and analogous to the mind and character of the person naturally, is generally, if not always, found in all gifts which are spiritual and supernatural.

To enunciate some of the facts which illustrate this truth is my next point.

First. There is generally found a striking analogy between the general natural character of the person and the character of the Gift he or she may have received: whether it has its most intimate analogy in the understanding, the imagination, the reason or the affections.

Secondly. A second fact which tends to illustrate and corroborate this truth is found in the strong analogy which is generally to be observed between the forms and conditions of the person's mind as they exist naturally, and those which are made manifest by the action of the Holy Ghost. Generally speaking, the natural powers and capacities of the mind of the person, whether great or small; whether rich and exu-

berant, or poor and restricted, have a correspondence in nature, degree and kind with the gifts that are manifested and exercised by them.

Thirdly. A third fact which also tends to confirm this truth is that the mode of expression, form of utterance and kind of speech - whether of educated or uneducated character - are all clearly related and allied to all that is natural in the person so possessing and exercising the supernatural gift. And even when there is an exception to this general rule (as exceptions there certainly are), the reason most probably is that the person's natural character, and peculiar natural qualities and powers, have been lying in a latent rather than in a developed state and condition, so that the Holy Ghost (who sees not as man seeth, and searches all the things of God in every redeemed and regenerate man), discovering what lies hidden and unmanifested for the use and service of God, quickens it into active exercise by His own spiritual, supernatural energy and power; and thus characteristics appear which seem altogether unlike and dissimilar from those which have heretofore been seen and recognised in the person.

But such exceptions, rightly interpreted, only prove the rule we have herein laid down. The Holy Ghost fully knows and sees what is hidden in the members of Christ, but it is His especial work to

quicken, develop and use all things which are profitable to God and His Church. Before we pass on from this part of our subject it is necessary, as a practical matter, to point out that it is often, if not generally, on this side of spiritual gifts, and because of the [06] natural element, that they are despised (the word here rendered “despised” admits of a much stronger rendering, viz., set at naught, treated as a trifle, or scarcely tolerable nuisance) by persons who are proud in intellect, or hear under the profane influence of a carnal state of mind. One of the objects of the Holy Spirit in the form He chooses by which to manifest Himself as a present God is to humble the natural pride of man; to cast down all high imaginations, “to scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts”, by the very forms and modes of utterance by means of which “He filleth the hungry with good things and sendeth the rich empty away”. And in order to this end He uses children, so far as earthly perfections and attainments go, and causes their earthly imperfections to appear in their modes of speech, manner of utterance, ungrammatical pronunciation, and even sometimes unmusical tones of voice. He speaks to us, as perhaps children need to be addressed, in order to blow upon our glory, intellectual vanity, and so the word which He gives to us becomes a childish word; “line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little and there a little”. And whilst this is for refreshing and rest of the thirsty and

weary, it acts as a gin and a snare to the proud and scornful.

Brethren, condemn yourselves always, whenever you feel inclined to despise a word of prophecy when uttered in the most childlike mode and form. Resist and crucify your fleshly pride for, be assured, there are not many steps between despising prophecy in any member of Christ, and your being snared and caught and taken captive by Satan in the toils of your own fleshly pride and intellectual vanity.

Whenever then it pleases the Holy Ghost to make use of persons who are children in the accomplishments of the flesh, and of this world, and to let their ignorance of the same appear in their manner, words, tones or imperfect use of language, resist and humble the rising tendency to despise it on that account; for God will lift up the afflicted people, but He will bring down all proud looks.

There is nothing that God sees with greater abhorrence than vanity and pride in His children; and there is no man that God knows at such a distance as the man who will not humble himself and put away his vainglory and pride. This does by no means end our danger in despising a gift of prophecy. There are many other ways by which Satan seeks to destroy the usefulness and the true exercise of spiritual gifts of

this kind as, for instance, when we dislike or despise prophesyings in persons against whom we have conceived some strong aversion, dislike, or even disgust. Now, in such cases as these, these sad and violent feelings have almost a necessary and certain tendency in us to identify the gift with the persons and to let our dislikes, aversions and disgusts carry us so far into wickedness and evil as to reject and despise every word the Holy Ghost may speak through that person's lips. How very fearful is this leaven of wickedness in a member of the Body of Christ! How it must tend to quench the Holy Ghost, not only in that despised member but also in all others, and above all in the person's own self; for does not a little leaven leaven the whole lump ?

There is a great danger in all persons of strong natural impulse who, sometimes from no natural cause whatever, always of course from no sufficient cause, either idolise a gift because of the person who possesses it, or else they treat the gift with disgust and will scarcely tolerate its exercise because they have conceived some strong aversion and dislike to the person exercising it. In such a character it too often happens that the idol of yesterday becomes the victim of today; and sometimes causes of the most trivial nature insensibly, but not the less wickedly, govern such a rapid change. And this danger of despising gifts (of prophecy especially and peculiarly)

arises out of our oft-times - yes, generally - being able to see great infirmities, defects and imperfections (not to mention faults or sins) in the persons and characters of those who are thus used by the Holy Ghost. It is an awful truth that the Holy Ghost inspires and uses sinful men: yea, even notwithstanding their faults and sinfulness: and that He also inspires and uses erring and straying men, although He is Himself the Infallible Spirit of all truth. Why, then, should we find fault with Him - for we despise Him always in despising any of His gifts - because in His wonderful humility and condescension He deigns to make use of persons in whom we are able to discern human infirmities or natural imperfections and defects ? If He does not disdain to use these persons, why should we disdain their being used by Him ? Surely it must be caused by the latent vice of pride, one form of which always idolises greatness in anything but equally despises imperfection, littleness or weakness.

All these dangers, and many others, arise from our observing the human element which is seen in some measure and degree in all spiritual gifts, and observing it in order to make a false and evil use of it [07].

I exhort you - yea, I plead with you - be on your guard against looking improperly upon the natural element and human side of the spiritual gifts, lest you

fall into that condemnation which is originally the Devil's. I mean pride, vanity and uplifting of yourselves against the instruments, the forms, the modes and ways of manifesting Himself through spiritual gifts which the Holy Ghost may deign of His own will to choose and make use of.

Welcome the smallest and feeblest of His gifts as a precious jewel, and then you will be able to make use of it rightly, the larger and the stronger, to God's glory and the good of His people.

PART IV. THE CHANGING OF THE OLD MAN INTO THE NEW.

If spiritual gifts rested merely in the natural, of course, there would not be supernatural. It is the office and work of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in the anointed man, to change the old man into the new, and to transform, elevate, quicken and spiritualise all the faculties and powers of man regenerate, whether of spirit, soul or body, into a super-natural, heavenly and spiritual condition, for the higher use and service of God; so that this process of change begins first in the spirit, then in the mind, and lastly in the body also. The way and mode of acting by which the Holy Ghost creates, gives and uses supernatural gifts in the Body of Christ supplies us with a foundation truth as to the operations of the Holy Trinity in general in the economy of grace. That way and mode of acting is the making of all things new by re-making them, or making them over again through the communication of super-added life, energy and power of a Divine, heavenly and spiritual character. He transubstantiates that which is earthly by its nature and condition into the nature and condition of that which is heavenly, and changes and transforms our whole man with all its attributes, faculties and powers into the image and likeness of our Prototype, Christ, the New Man, from glory to glory until all is finally completed in the eternal weight of glory. (The Greek word

signifies the change in figure or external appearance: the outward change being the manifestation of the real inward change.)

He who turned the water into wine at the marriage feast seems to have given us, in the working of a miracle, the key to all those actings in the mystical kingdom of His grace whereby He would turn all the old things into new, making all the old to pass away in the heavenly region of His Church, and make the old things to become new. He is seen, as it were, turning the water of the old creation into the good wine of the new, and so manifesting forth His glory in the new created kingdom of His grace. We know this will be the case in the mortal bodies of the living, and with the corruptible bodies of the dead in Christ at His second coming; and what shall hinder that the same truth (in earnest and firstfruits at least) shall not also be applicable here and now to the spirits and souls of the regenerate with all their slumbering desires, affections, aspirations, capacities, powers, attributes and gifts? Transformation, transmodification, transmutation and transubstantiation, shall all have their ultimate end in translation into that place where Christ is gone before to prepare it for us.

A spiritual gift given to a member of Christ by the Holy Ghost is nothing more or less than putting forth a creative power: an act by which He creates some-

thing in the regenerate man which did not exist before, although the substratum or basis upon which He acts had a prior existence. He creates anew, not after the mode of the old creation by which all things were produced from nothing, but after the manner of the new creation by which all old things are, by a creative act, newly made by the super-addition of His heavenly energy and power.

I think, brethren, we shall find some very valuable, practical truths to flow out of that which has been here stated on the supernatural character of spiritual gifts.

First. What an awful thing it is for the anointed to know that the Holy Ghost is given them to dwell in them as an ever-present new Creator. He who brooded over the face of the waters of the old creation in order that He might create further marvels of created being from the already existing elements, broods over, yea, and broods in, each one of us continually in order that He may search out elements of our old being which He can re-create for higher ends and purposes, and endow with higher perfections and gifts. He does this that we may become useful to God and to Christ in His Body the Church, and this both in time and eternity.

Second. Another practical truth is that the Holy Ghost can only carry on His work of new-creation in us as we are consentient, willing and co-operative thereto. Herein the new-creation differs from the old. In the work of new-creation He ever consults the free and consenting will of the creature on whom, and in whom He acts. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty". In the exercise of this liberty we can resist His power, refuse to receive His Gifts, and even abuse or destroy them when received.[08]

Third. Another practical truth is, that the gift of God given by the laying on of hands is no mere spiritual gift of the Holy Ghost, but is the gift of the Person of the Holy Ghost Himself; the gift of Him who is the Giver of all gifts "according to His own will", and who, when inhabiting us, ever seeks to endow us with such gifts as He, the New-Creator, sees fit to entrust to our keeping and use. It is the bounden duty, therefore, of every one of us to be waiting upon Him day and night, and working together with Him, that He may always find us ready and willing to receive His new-creation gifts as He is ever ready and willing to bestow them upon us. His eyes are ever searching out in us all He can take, transform and use for God's service in the new-creation; and it is His desire to make the utmost use of us if we be but willing and obedient. Let us then never resist His will; never quench His power, or refuse His gifts. If we do, we shall assuredly frustrate

one of the ends of our anointing, one of the objects of His inhabitation. If we search our hearts we shall find that generally pride is at the root whensoever anointed persons desire not, or refuse to receive, or resist the will of the Holy Ghost in the endowment of them with any of His gifts. These gifts bring no glory to us; often they bring deep self-humiliation and perhaps exhibit our creature nothingness while they glorify God. And we do not wish that God should get the glory, nor His Church any good, if it be indeed at the price of the humiliation of our self-esteem, or the casting down of our vanity or self-importance. Thus is the all-creating hand of God resisted by us, until perhaps after much striving with us and finding no willing co-operation, but continual unwillingness and positive resistance, He is constrained to cease His gracious pleadings, and refrain from His holy promptings, and so to remain in silence and in rejected sorrow and grief within us; hindered by us in His gracious designs and purposes. The natural element in a spiritual gift is, so to speak, its substructure, and the supernatural element its superstructure: the one of the old creation, the other of the new. And such gifts are given to, or created in the regenerated and anointed for the specific object that through their use and means the Holy Ghost, as the present, Personal God, may be manifested. Hence they are called "manifestations of the spirit". Manifestation means outward demonstration of our inner and hidden reality - per-

sonal being. As the green foliage of a tree manifests and demonstrates the presence of a hidden life, so does a spiritual gift, given, possessed and used by the Holy Ghost, make manifest outwardly His hidden, inner presence. To have spiritual consciousness always kept awake to this truth (a truth concerning which we are always naturally inclined to fall asleep) is for the spiritual profit and education of all who are continually engaged in the worship and service of God. And such a consciousness is the constant thirst of all regenerate spirits.

Finally. By means of such manifestations of God's hidden presence in the Church we are brought into nearer and more intimate realisation of His presence than we are by those modes of His presence which St. Paul describes as being "above and through all"; while His presence in the Church he describes as "in you all." (Eph. IV. 6.). That mode of Divine Presence which is above, or over all is that which is forever manifest before the eyes of Angels and all the heavenly beings in the highest heaven above. That which is "through all" is His outward form of presence as dwelling in His own immensity everywhere, wholly, always. While that which is in the Church and is thus by spiritual gifts made manifest, is that mode by which we are enabled, as it were, to hear His voice, enter into His counsels, receive the knowledge of His

mind and will, and so be on terms of the most intimate communion and fellowship with Him.

Faith is that spiritual disposition by means of which the regenerated and anointed man is enabled to believe, trust and confide in God as a living, acting Being, according to His declarations, promises and engagements; and both sight and sense and even reason are in the present world rather its hindrances and antagonists than its helpmeets and friends. Hence it is always a struggle and fight to keep the faith as it "was once delivered to the Saints" as a vital principle of life and conduct. Well, therefore, does the Apostle call it the "good fight of faith". How much more do we need all that brings us into personal contact with the Living God in order that we attain first of all "unfeigned faith" - that priceless gift of God by means of which alone we can receive beneficially any of His other and further gifts. And even when we have received this precious gift, do we need aids to sustain and support and increase it in daily practical exercise, inwards and outwards unto the perfect day? Surely then the continuous manifestations of the inner presence of the Holy Ghost, the ever active New-Creator in the Church, must be a mighty support to faith in its present trials and troubles. Surely faith without such gracious aids will languish and fail, through that ever wear and tear which passes over it because of its ceaseless struggle with the things

which are earthly, seen and temporal. Dependence upon God, consciousness of His immediate presence, listening to His words of warning, comfort and hope, will always be to faith a mighty support. Nay, it is the very aliment by which faith lives and is kept in vigorous exercise [09].

The light of nature, the forms of the intellect, tradition, the letter of Holy Scripture, creeds, formularies, ceremonies, sacraments and ministries of all kinds, will become sterile and unprofitable unless the manifested presence of the Holy Ghost is continually experienced and known as that presence should be known and felt by means of His supernatural gifts.

PART V. SUPERNATURAL POWERS.

It has been said already that spiritual gifts are impersonal powers, and that they are distinct both from the Person of the Giver and the receiver.

They are impersonal powers, i.e. they are powers possessed and used by persons, but are not the persons who possess and use them. They are distinct from the Person of the Holy Ghost who is the Giver of them. They are not the Holy Ghost Himself, but are created, prepared and given by Him to the members of Christ in order that He may use them. God's gifts are not God, though God is manifested by them in their use and proper exercise. They are distinct from the man, the receiver and possessor.

A gift is not a person, either in the old or new creation. A gift is a reality possessed by a person, and for the right use of it that person is wholly responsible. But such distinction of a gift from the persons, both Giver and receiver, does not by any means imply separation from either. (We shall at another time show this truth with some of its practical consequences.) (See Chap. VI and Chap. I).

A gift, moreover, is no self-active power which energises a man irrespective of the Personal volition of the Holy Ghost, the sole User of it, or of the man who

exercises it. Were such the case, all responsibility for its right and proper use, as also for its due and fitting exercise would of course be impossible. A man in that case would become the passive and unaccountable subject of the gift, carried away by a force and energy over which he would have no spiritual, volitional, personal control. This would be the unmaning of man. It would reduce him to the state and condition of a living machine, or self-conscious automaton. Whatever faculties and gifts God has bestowed upon us in nature, we have power over them. They are truly our gifts that we use and exercise them as, when and how we choose.

This is only partially true in regard to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, super-natural in the new-creation order of grace; that is to say, we have power over their exercise, yea, have power over their use also, although that is a power we ought never to exercise, for it belongs to the Holy Ghost alone. The Personal use of the gift belongs to the Holy Ghost, the Giver, and the exercise of it to the person of him who possesses it. Still, man - the person possessing a gift - so possesses it that its use by the Holy Ghost depends at all times and under all circumstances on the free volition of the man's own will.

On the true nature and character of such powers let us enquire more definitely and practically, since it

is highly necessary that this matter should be clearly understood by an anointed people who ought to be exercising the gifts of the Holy Ghost for the glory of God and the good of the Church.

We therefore proceed to point out to you in what way and after what manner a person possessing a spiritual gift has power over it; and the three modes of power, viz., 1st, negative power ; 2nd, permissive power ; 3rd, positive power.

In the fact that these three forms of power are possessed by us in relation to spiritual gifts there is a wonderful demonstration that personal liberty, freedom, self-possession and self-control are essential attributes in man which God never tampers with, never seeks to weaken, or in any degree enslave, much less destroy. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty". On this truth rests all human responsibility in the possession and exercise of any of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Were it possible for God for a moment to suspend, or take away, the full action of man's will in spiritual things, that moment he would be reduced to a mere living machine, unmanned, shorn of his glory.

I have said that man regenerate possesses over any gift of the Holy Ghost a negative power, by which I mean that he can actually resist the motions, quench the power, refuse the impulsion of the Holy

Ghost acting upon his spirit, and seeking to actuate his gift. Even when it is the will and desire of the Holy Ghost to inspire and use it, man can refuse to exercise the gift; he can partially, and completely, resist the Holy Ghost and oppose the impulsion of the Spirit's power upon his spirit and over his gift.

This is a sinful use of the freedom; it brings the man under sin and the guilt of quenching the power of an indwelling God. In the exercise of this negative power a man can refuse to receive a gift when the Spirit would vouchsafe [10] one to him; when given to him the man can refuse to exercise it and, after exercising it for a time, he can refuse to do so any longer.

Moreover, man has, as I have said, a permissive power, i.e. he can voluntarily allow another person to act upon him and for him; and we consent and yield ourselves to co-operate with Him in His actions. That is the true place of man in the exercise of a spiritual gift.

It consists in a true willingness to yield up his gift to be acted upon and used by the Holy Ghost as, when, and how He sees fit; and in man's so consenting and yielding up his gift he by no means loses responsibility for its due and proper exercise and control, even when it is so actuated and used by the Holy Ghost. The gift is not the property of the man pos-

sessing it. It belongs solely to the Holy Ghost for His use and exercise in the Church, and for the manifestation of the power and presence of God: but it is also for the gift of the man that he never ceases to be responsible for its proper use and exercise.

Finally. Man has positive power over his spiritual gift whereby he is able to excite his gift into action, to re-animate it as one would re-animate, or stir up, an expiring flame. This power he can exercise in a legitimate or illegitimate way. He exercises positive power legitimately when he re-animates or excites it or stirs it up by spiritual exercises in prayer and meditation, or in the Holy Communion, in order that the Holy Spirit may be able to make freer, purer and more perfect use of it. This doubtless was what St. Paul exhorted Timothy to do in relation to that gift which he had received. (Greek: αναζωπυρεω = to re-enliven a fire). II Tim: I, 6. But a man exercises this power improperly and wickedly if he excites his gift into activity for his own use, to speak his own desires, thoughts or meditations, so as to substitute them for the clear and pure manifestations of the Holy Ghost revealing His mind and will thereby.

If such then, brethren, be our powers in relation to spiritual gifts of the Holy Ghost, it is my duty now to give you a few practical exhortations:

First: As an anointed people, (a people in whom the Holy Ghost continuously and everlastingly dwells and walks, that He may work in you to will and to do His good pleasure) to be desirous to receive, watchful to observe and careful to cherish in yourselves the supernatural motions and manifestations of the Holy Ghost.

For while all His motions in us are indeed supernatural, both in their nature and effects, yet when as it were, He takes away the veil that hides from us the presence of His inscrutable Person within us, and by an immediate and direct operation upon our spirits, makes us to become spiritually conscious of that most Blessed Presence, we may be sure that He does so for wise, good and holy purposes, and in doing so has always our edification, God's glory, or the Church's good - or all three together - as the end and object He is seeking to accomplish.

Generally, He unveils Himself thus within our own spiritual consciousness for one of three purposes.

First. Either to witness to our spirits as our living and abiding seal, that we are in very deed all that God declares He has made us, (and which we knew by faith before) and so establishing and confirming us as

individual persons in the faith which God has bestowed upon us.

Or, Secondly: He thus reveals Himself to inspire us with light and energy in our worship and service God-wards, (whether in private or public) as individual members of Christ's One Body, thus lifting us up in spirit to worship God in spirit as well as in truth, and thus also supplying to us that objective aid and power by which we are able to know and discern the reality of all those things of the Spirit which are presented to us objectively as realities of faith.

Or, Thirdly: He thus manifests Himself in order that He may give, create, perfect and use the supernatural gifts which He, according to His own will, bestows upon the members of Christ.

The Holy Ghost being God Almighty searches and knows thoroughly the state and condition of our hearts, and His preventing grace kindles within us desires which He has it in His good will and purpose to fulfil. He therefore kindles in us, among other good desires, this, viz., that by His grace and mercy he would be pleased to manifest Himself to us, and in us, and through us. To us our strength and confirmation in faith. In us to aid us in our personal service and worship. Through us by vouchsafing to us one of His spiritual and heavenly gifts. Let us then sincerely

desire for all these important purposes His conscious, supernatural, manifested presence. Let us not strangle the desire if He has given it to us. Let us seek it if we have it not. Let us wait upon Him that it may be fulfilled to us more and more continually. Then let us ever be watchful to observe such manifestations, (they are given that we may foster them) and seek all ministerial help and counsel to enable us to do so wisely, patiently and steadily. Alas! How careless and indifferent are many of us in these most sacred things! How [11] sleepy and how unobservant! How do we (often from an unbelieving heart, which always entails an uncleansed conscience) shrink, as it were, from being brought into conscious nearness or personal contact with God the Holy Ghost, our Comforter, Sanctifier and Glorifier. Therefore He comes and acts within and upon our spirits, and gently impels them for one or more of the purposes named above; but we either do not give heed to Him, or fly away from Him, or else willfully and wickedly grieve His Person and resist and quench His motions. Let us then, each one, be more than ever careful to observe in ourselves all such motions and manifestations in order that they may be used for all such purposes as He in His goodness and grace shall vouchsafe them for, remembering that unto this very end have all been sealed and anointed, and thus God would have us reap this the first-fruits thereof more and more unto the perfect day.

Lastly. Having become conscious of such blessed motions and manifestations in however feeble a degree or small a measure, let us carefully and painstakingly cherish and foster them.

In order to fulfil this duty with diligence and fortitude, ever remember that the ways of God the Holy Ghost are deep and profound, and that He has His special way with each. Probably His way with no two of the members of Christ is exactly the same, although there may be, and probably is, a general analogy in all. We should be as careful and painstaking in cherishing and fostering in ourselves such supernatural motives and manifestations as we would be in preserving any valuable treasure entrusted to our safe-keeping. Everything calculated to disturb, grieve, resist or quench the Blessed Spirit should be most carefully avoided and eschewed. All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malicious feelings should be loathed and avoided, for nothing hinders, grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit dwelling in a person so soon as these inward forms of evil. I need not speak of the more outward criminal forms which manifestly defile the temple of God, and expose to Divine Justice all who commit such sacrilege and profanation.

On the other hand, foster in yourselves the motions of the Holy Spirit by holy living outwardly and

inwardly: by habitual and constant intercourse with God: by private self-examination, meditation and prayer: and by making known to the Lord through His ministers all your difficulties, experiences and desires. Thus shall we guard ourselves from delusions, excitement, enthusiasm, fanaticism and mistaken feelings of excitement; yea, even from spiritual emotions which are of a wrong character and even have only one end in view in all we do and in all we desire, viz., that God may be glorified in Jesus Christ through all the operations which we experience of the Holy Spirit's indwelling and inspiring presence.

PART VI. IMPERSONAL POWERS. (See page 1).

We have said that spiritual gifts are impersonal powers which are distinct both from the Giver and the receiver, and yet they ought never for an instant to be separated from either in their use and exercise. By separation, I mean taken out of the personal power and control either of the Holy Ghost or of the man who possesses the gift.

A spiritual gift in a man can be seized hold of, excited and used by Satan and his Angels if the man who possesses it abides not in unity with Christ and His Mystical Body the Church; or willfully and wickedly breaks loose from helping and binding ordinances around and above him, on both which he himself and the gift are by God's appointment made to be co-active, interdependent and co-associative. Satan has power, if the saints of God give place to him, to seize, use, exercise and pervert all the powers of the new creation as he has done all the powers of the old.

A spiritual gift ought not be used by the Holy Ghost as the active Personal Agent alone. A gift, though indeed given to the man in Christ, is never used by the Holy Ghost without the man's willing consent, permission and co-operation. It appertains

to the Holy Ghost alone to supply the volition that moves it into activity. He alone gives the spiritual energy which, acting in the man's spirit, directs the proper use to be made of the gift. It is His operation concurrently, and generally simultaneously, to inspire the spirit of the man with conscious supernatural power, fill his mind with light, and his tongue with words unto utterance.

The man in Christ is the responsible steward of the gift of the Holy Ghost who is the absolute Owner, Possessor and User of it. It is therefore usurpation and robbery of it for it to be used by any other person than the Holy Ghost, and for any other than His purposes. It ought, moreover, never to be separated from the personal agency, the man, the receiver and exerciser of it; for otherwise how can he be held responsible for its right and proper exercise? The receiver can never be absolved from his responsibility. [12].

The Apostles in their writings always lay upon the person so gifted the sole responsibility for its due and proper exercise. If the man be thus responsible he must be able by his own personal power and will to control his gift, and also the power of the Holy Ghost by which alone he should at all times be moved and impelled (though never compelled) to action.

The first kind of responsibility mentioned in Holy Scripture as belonging to persons possessing spiritual gifts is that of exercising their gifts in subordination and obedience to the authorised and responsible rulers of the Church. This is manifest in what St. Paul writes to the Romans (XII. 6-8) and Corinthians (I. Cor. XIV). He claims authority to teach them concerning the nature, measure and exercise of their various gifts and claims, moreover, that such persons should recognise and obey in regard to the rules and instructions he gives.

To the gifted persons generally he says, "Let them acknowledge" - i.e. recognise and confess - "that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord". (Rom. XII, 3-6).

Secondly: A responsibility of a person possessing a spiritual gift is to exercise it at all times according to its ascertained measure, a prescribed border assigned to it by the responsible ruler of the Church. No man is competent to ascertain the measure of grace which God has bestowed upon the Church in his special gift; nor is he competent to determine or prescribe the border or limits in and by which he is bound in its exercise. These both must be ascertained, prescribed and assigned to him by the authority and commandment of the Lord made known to him by the responsible rulers and guides of the Church. The same is

declared by the Apostle when he exhorts the Romans “not to think” (concerning their gifts and grace) “more highly than they ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the gift of faith”. He shows that various members of Christ have different measures and functions in the one Body: some to prophecy; some to deaconise; and some to rule; and they that rule in and over spiritual gifts are exhorted to do it “with diligence”. The gift, (i.e. of rule) therefore, is by no means free from interdependence on all the memberships, especially on that which they committed to it, the Lord’s authority and rule. The genuineness, character, use, measure and burden of all spiritual gifts ought to be ascertained and certified by the Rulers of the Church and not by the gifted persons themselves.

Thirdly. A third responsibility of the gifted person is to exercise his gift according to the analogy of the authorised faith of the Catholic Church. St. Paul applies this particularly to those who prophesy; but it is applicable to all gifted persons. The injunction of the Apostle indicates inferentially the possibility and danger of exercising a spiritual gift in such a way as to fall into a snare. The authorised faith of the Church is given to it by Apostles and not by Prophets. The usefulness of all gifts is to build up the saints on the foundation laid once for ever by Apostles and Prophets and contained in the Old and New Testaments.

Spiritual gifts, and especially that of prophecy, are given to illustrate, enlighten and apply to us the faith and hope already received.

Fourthly. A fourth responsibility of gifted persons is to exercise their gift according to the rule: 1st - of general usefulness; 2nd - of ecclesiastical order; and 3rd - of natural decency. The Rulers of the Church, and not the persons possessing the gift, are the best judges of its nature, kind, and fitness for use. And in these judgments the profit of all, and not personal and private edification, is the rule to be acted on. For this reason the gift of tongues without interpretation is rather for private and personal use than for public and corporate use. God is not a God of disorder and confusion. All His works reveal the most consummate order; hence there should be order in the Church at all times, but especially when all before Him, and in His name and immediate presence, offer up the great memorial Sacrifice. Even the forms and laws of nature are to be observed, and not despised, much less outraged, in the exercise of spiritual gifts. A woman, if she becomes a vessel of the Holy Ghost in the form of prophecy, may not in exercising the gift think that she is liberated from the observance of decorum and natural diffidence and modesty which are the charm and grace of her nature. (I Cor. XI, 3-26). None may commit the indecency of interrupting or disturbing another while exercising his gift, but must restrain

his gift or, for a time, suppress the power which impels him to action. (I Cor. XIV, 29). “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets”, and not the prophets to their spirits; they have the power to control and rule their own spirits endowed with these spiritual gifts for the purpose of order and common decency, and are always responsible to God and His Church for so doing. (As to Tongues, see I Cor. XIV, 27).

PART VII. POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME.

Our fifth definition in regard to spiritual gifts was that the Holy Spirit of God is, or ought to be, the sole User of them all, and what is the general nature and character of the use He makes of them.

In the right use and proper exercise of every spiritual gift there is not only a manifestation of the Presence of God in the Person of the Holy Ghost, but there also accompanies such manifestations of His Presence (as the shadow accompanies the substance) the revelation of His Power, Love & Wisdom. “Stir up” says St. Paul to Timothy, “the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands”. (2 Tim. 1-6). For God hath not given us the spirit of fear⁶ (δειλια = fear, to shrink away from through timidity, or an undue sense of awe or terror), “but of power and of love and of sound-mindedness”; that state of mind in which prudence, knowledge and wisdom appear conspicuously. The accompaniments then of the presence of the Holy Ghost are power, love and sound-mindedness. Power, shining forth through the spirit; Love, through the heart; and wisdom, through the mind.

⁶ πνευμα δειλιας

When spiritual gifts are rightly used, i.e. by God alone, and duly exercised by man, the fruits of a Personal, present God are brought into actual practical experience. These are three fundamental attributes of God which come forth for the benefit of an imperfect Church and a fallen world in each and all in the proper exercises of spiritual gifts. These are all acts of Divine power enlightened with wisdom and inflamed with love shining forth through such manifestations of Divine Presence exerted and exercised through the voluntary co-operation of the regenerated and anointed members of Christ. Herein are to be seen those general Divine uses which the Holy Ghost will ever make of them, whether it be in the present condition of the Church and world, or in that higher and better condition which will be seen and enjoyed in the world to come. In these gifts are not temporal, but eternal things: they are eternal things let down from heaven and given to the Church on this side of her future inheritance. Such then being the inherent nature and blessed use which the Holy Spirit makes of His supernatural gifts, viz., in their applying the power, love and wisdom of God in Christ towards an imperfect Church and a fallen world in this present age, we may get a glimpse of their application and uses hereafter as the benedictory power of the world to come. For the sum of the spiritual gifts of the Church (embraced as a whole) provides her with powers which, by means of her gifted members, are fitted to bring her

her into active sympathy and real fellowship with the whole circle of being through all the ranks of angelic and human intelligences down to the lowest forms and forces of inanimate nature; for the spiritual gifts contain and embrace all kinds of power - spiritual, mental and sensible - and so put the Church in immediate contact with all existence whatever. But in this present age these powers of the age to come, partaking of the general immaturity of the Church, are necessarily of an initial rudimental and therefore imperfect character. They are indeed perfect in themselves by themselves as latent gifts of the Holy Ghost; but here and now they are very imperfectly and partially developed in their Divine use and human exercise because of the general state of humanity and infirmity in which the Body of Christ in mortal flesh and in a sinful condition subsists. But when the Church passes into the condition of immortality and glory in spirit, soul and body: when she arrives unto the stature of the perfect Man: then, and not till then, all these rudimentary powers which lie slumbering in her imperfect members will burn out into all their strength and perfection, and the Church within and the world below, yea, and Satan and his angels, shall be made to feel their perfected form and energy. It is only in this sense that the Holy Scripture ever declares that any of these shall cease and pass away. They will cease and pass away just as the imperfect, undeveloped powers of childish immaturity cease

when they pass into the more mature and perfect development of the full-grown man. Therefore it is in this sense, and in no other, that St. Paul declares that “prophecy shall cease, tongues shall fail, and knowledge shall vanish away”. Because “now we know in part, and prophesy in part” (i.e. in imperfection and immaturity) “but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away”. Now we speak, understand and think like the imperfect child but when we become a perfect man, when we put away childish things; until then the imperfect remains, and only vanishes away by the perfect thing taking its place; the powers and faculties of the child developing into those of the perfect man.

This explains, likewise, why it is that the Holy Ghost, bestowed upon the regenerate children of God, is called in Scripture the earnest and firstfruits of their future inheritance. He is the present earnest of it because here and now He endows them with powers which are their present portion of that future inheritance of glory and power which shall then be fully and completely possessed, used and exercised. He is the present firstfruits of it because He works in them in the present age, and gives them to possess and enjoy, according to their present ability and measure, all these wonderful capabilities of enjoying God and [14] blessing creation below which they shall then possess and enjoy in fullness and completeness. In each and

all these gifts, when rightly used and exercised, the Church has the seal and assurance of God, and gives witness to the world around her, that she is destined to exercise the Lordship of the Head, Christ Jesus, over all spiritual, mental and sensible creation in the age and world to come: which age and world to come is not destined to be put under Angels, (like the present) but under Christ and His glorified Church. The present use and application of those spiritual powers, while they indicate the Church’s office and ministerial lordship in and under Christ, in and over the world to come, have nevertheless a necessary tendency to help forward her growth to that state of perfection.

Wisdom branches into prophecy and discernment of spirits. The gift of wisdom with its two branches or offsprings, of prophecy and the discerning of spirits, not only fit her to rule over and bless all orders of spiritual beings in the world to come, but also enable her, here and now, in her state of immaturity and minority, to bring forth from her living treasury - the glorified Head - all such things as she requires in the revelation, understanding, uses and appropriation of God Himself, of His hidden mysteries, of the presence and operation of spiritual agents, good and evil, as well as the actual discernment of all evil uses and improper exercise of her spiritual powers.

Knowledge branches into tongues and the interpretation of tongues. The word of knowledge, whence proceed and spring forth the two accompaniments of tongues and the interpretation of tongues; while they indicate that she is qualified for her office in the age to come as ruling in and over all mental, moral and intellectual creations, yet are in her possession for present usefulness, and by these means she is enabled to discriminate, enjoy and declare in words and forms of the Holy Ghost's inspiration so as to apprehend explicitly all the wonderful realities of God's kingdom which are implicitly held by her as the objects of her faith and hope.

Faith branches into healing and miracles. So, likewise, by the gift of faith with its two handmaids or helpmeets, healings and miracles (or powers), the Church manifests her capacity for operating and effecting the purpose of God in the coming age over all inert and powerless matter, as well as over the human body and the suffering sentient creation. ("Though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains" - This gift, I take it, had to do more especially with exerting power over physical nature). To another, "the energising of powers", or the inner operation of powers. This would seem to me to be a gift which enables the person in and through the Spirit to energise forms, imparting virtues unto living or dead things which they do not naturally possess, and are not ac-

ording to nature fitted to communicate to others. The use of the "clay and spittle" on the part of Our Lord; the "handkerchiefs and aprons" of Paul, and the "shadow" of Peter; of the words of exorcism, etc.; are instances in point. (Acts V. 15 ; XIX. 11,12. Rom. XV. 18, 19). (Sorcery, perhaps, may be Satan's perversion of this gift).

PART VIII. MODE OF WORKING BY THE HOLY GHOST.

We have already shown that man, the receiver of a spiritual gift, is, in the exercise thereof, always a voluntary, passive and responsible agent.

The mode by which the Holy Ghost makes use of a spiritual gift is by conscious, active and spiritual inspiration in and on the spirit of the man who possesses the gift, which gift is a power or faculty of his spirit so inspired. As therefore the spirit of a man thus endowed with a supernatural gift is under the control of his person, and subject at all times to his personal will, so is also the gift possessed by him as an adjunct or faculty of the same under similar subjection and control.

Inspiration of the Holy Ghost acting immediately and directly on the man's spirit, and so mediately and indirectly on his spiritual gift or faculty, leaves him a perfectly free agent in its exercise.

Although moved and impelled to its use by the direct, immediate and conscious action of the Holy Spirit upon his spirit, yet he is never compelled, or forced without his consent, or deprived of ability to yield up his gift freely to the active use of the Blessed Comforter. He therefore ever remains a free responsi-

ble agent, for the reason that he retains all his voluntary powers of action and passion over his spirit and consequently over his gift: although both are under the action of the inspiring energy of the Divine Person of the Holy Ghost. The agency of the Blessed Spirit over the spirit of the man is that of a positive, personal, potential activity, while the agency of the man himself is that of free, positive, personal and potential passivity.

And this truth explains St. Paul's meaning in I Cor. XIV. 32, where he inculcates rules and regulations for the orderly and decent exercise of spiritual [15] gifts, and insists upon this being observed because "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets ". For, if this were not the case, all regulations laid upon prophets for the orderly and decent exercise of their gift would be not only impossible, but tantalising to them; imposing upon them laws and commandments which it would be out of their power to observe and obey.

There are dangers against which persons having spiritual gifts should be guarded. One is that of mistaking mere fleshly excitement, nervous irritability, or mental emotions, as being supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost. By fleshly excitement, I mean that excitement which strings from our fleshly infirmities, or from that of another person's excitement, e.g. the ex-

citement which exists more or less in extempore preaching, if great care be not taken to hold the flesh under and to keep the mind in peace and calmness.

Generally, in and by such outward excitement, our minds and spirits are considerably affected and influenced; and when under such influence there is a danger often of supposing such excitement is the Holy Spirit: nay, many mistake it for His energy and power, and some even go so far as to name it so. But this is an entire mistake. God is not the Author of excitement, but holy calmness and peace; and our duty is to be always jealous over ourselves, not to be led away by such imitations of the power and operations of the Holy Spirit. We may not say “to the word, Awake” or “to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach”. We may not in fleshly excitement kindle a fire for ourselves and walk in the light of the fire we have kindled. Let us ever remember that which is born of the flesh is flesh and not spirit; and that in the things of the Spirit of God the flesh profiteth nothing. All it can do is to counterfeit and imitate actings and operations of the Holy Ghost.

Another danger many are exposed to is to mistake nervous irritability for the supernatural movements and motions of the Holy Ghost. This danger will, of course, be most likely to affect persons who are of a nervous temperament, as the former will

those who are of an excitable and impulsive character; but in both, God, in His ordinances, is our defence. Our mental emotions are the deepest and therefore the strongest power which lies hidden in our complex nature; and many are the dangers which beset us from this quarter. We all know how all but uncontrollable feelings are when deeply moved by causes which affect them strongly; how almost impossible not to laugh or weep as the ludicrous or sympathetic parts of our nature are acted upon. Now nothing when truly ministered or rightly received is so soul-stirring or heart-moving as those things in the Gospel which tell of the love of God in Christ, and of the joys that are prepared for them that love and serve Him. The heart almost bursts, and the tears flow, and the eyes glisten, and the lips speak out all the joy or grief which may have for the time possession over the man. Now here lies a danger, viz., to suppose that these mental emotions are nothing more nor less than the manifest supernatural inspirations of the Holy Ghost. It is not so, although these emotions are right and proper if kept in due bounds and not allowed to run into unseemly extravagance. But these emotions, if allowed to run riot and to pass out of our sober control, produce two evils; for they often effect the structure of the mind itself, or else they fill it with false, mistaken ideas and imaginations from which it becomes very difficult to deliver it, and in many cases almost impossible.

Sometimes a kind of spiritual monomania in the overwhelming influence and power of some one predominating religious idea takes possession of the man. Sometimes heated visions of the imagination lead the man to suppose that such emotions and the ideas that spring from them are inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

At other times in different temperaments a fixed and irrational fanaticism takes the place of rational and sober faith. While in other cases fanciful chimeras flit before the mind and haunt it like accompanying ghosts and shades.

Now against all these dangers of the flesh which can be made so easily to simulate the operations of God to the utter subversion of genuine gifts of the Holy Ghost we need to be guarded and protected, both as respects ourselves, from ourselves, as well as from others who may perchance fall into the same danger. These can never be the fruits which spring from a real, genuine and true gift of the Holy Ghost, properly used and rightly exercised; for He is always the Spirit of power and love and of sound-mindedness, and He will not and cannot produce these unwholesome states and moods of the mind, nor can His blessed operations ever leave such effects as their fruit and offspring. Nothing more fits the spirit of man to be the instrument of the Holy Spirit's inspirations than

inspirations than calmness, quietness, order, peace and purity. When He finds our spirits thus attuned to His blessed touch then He can use them, and through them our gifts, just as the harper sweeps his fingers over his harp and pours into it all the inspirations of his soul and spirit.

Hence, in order to the Holy Ghost making free and unimpeded use of our gifts, there needs the following qualifications on our part who are responsible to [16] Him for their proper exercise.

First. A deep spirit of holy self-possession and self-control, in and over our own human spirits, which, controlling and holding in our own power, we are entirely free to yield up to the Holy Spirit an entirely free and voluntary service of our whole being, spirit, soul and body, but especially the first, without which it is impossible for Him to use our gifts, or for us to exercise them without the manifestation of the infirmity and sinfulness of the instrument He uses, and often to the blending, mixing and confounding of the sinfulness and folly of the one with the holiness and infallibility of the other. The spirit of man thus held in subjection and in his power is the apt and ready organ for the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

Second. The next qualification is that of free power in and over his will, yielding up to the Holy Spirit

Spirit His Divine right to use His gifts for His glory at all times: a power not of indifference or neutrality but of responsible, passive, willing consent and design.

Third. A purified imagination delivered from the bondage of this present evil world, and fallen flesh, and filled with the forms of the spirit of truth as revealed in Holy Scripture.

Fourth. A well-taught and instructed mind in the things of the Spirit of God. A mind which, ever dwelling in the light is in a condition to receive from God fresh light, and so be a fitting medium for reflecting and communicating to others.

Fifth. Lastly, the acquiring in the heart the calmness and quietness of the peace of God which passeth understanding. The earnest and foretaste of that tranquillity which shall be seen in the sea of glass mingled with fire, when all strife is ended and all storms are hushed in the everlasting home and rest of God.

PART IX. DISTRIBUTION OF POWERS.

In the seventh definition as to the nature and character of spiritual gifts we said that they were the dividings, measurings, distributions of powers among the various members of Christ's Body, the plenitude of which resides in Him alone.

There may be, and there is, a wonderful diversion and distribution of "Powers" in the Body of Christ, where there can be no division in the Person Who imparts, uses and inspires these powers for the service of God in the benediction of men. So these gifts are called by St. Paul distributions, or divisions, of "Powers".

A division of powers implies a centre or source whence they flow forth, and in which they are originally united; and they imply a Person or Personal Substance which holds them in unity, as one absolute unit or unity and that source and centre is Jesus, the Glorified God-Man. And His Blessed Spirit takes of His fulness and so divides to each one severally.

But it is not all the truth that in Christ Jesus, the Living Head of the Body, dwells all the fulness of God. It is equally true that that same Body, the one Catholic Church, is the "fulness of Him that filleth all

in all.” Moreover, that “of His fulness have all we received, and grace” (in the members) “answering to grace” in the Head. (John I.16). Out of this fulness have all we received and grace answering to grace. Christ Jesus therefore in, and over, and with the Church, His Mystical Body, contains all the communicable fulness of God. A fulness how vast, how inscrutable! A fulness existing first in Him in personal unity, then in the Church’s corporate unity, and then divided, measured and distributed amongst all the various members and memberships according to His Will and their spiritual capacity.

Applying this general truth to spiritual gifts in particular we shall perceive in this connection some very important practical considerations which will enable us to discern their relations to the Church in general, and to each member in particular. To this subject I now proceed.

First. I observe that all spiritual gifts spring from, are parts of, and should end in, an absolute living unity. They are like the vital powers and forces of a living body which live in it, and are of it, and for it.

All schismatic action, therefore, in these powers is disease, contrary to their existence and subsistence as the living powers of a supernatural body. (I Cor. XII.12-14). Unity of action, therefore, both in letter

and spirit is necessary, and as natural in all rightly used and exercised spiritual gifts as that of all various powers, fluids and energies that work and co-operate for the well-being and support of any one living body. [17].

Unity of aim, service and action is not one of accidents that may possibly attend their operations: it is their natural bent and direction according to their own proper essence and subsistence as vital powers belonging to the one living Body of Christ. Schismatic action, therefore, in these gifts has its cause, not in the gifts themselves, but, from the entrance into them of some foreign, deadly poison, which vitiates their action and prevents their use and service.

But unity is neither broken nor disturbed by a variety of co-existing and co-acting faculties and powers. And the Church’s gifts are very various and dissimilar in their manifestations and operations. How many and how various are the attributes, faculties and powers that appear in any one single person’s being; and yet how they all act together in, with, and for him in absolute and unbroken unity.

And so generally is it in the gifts and powers of the Body of Christ. By their united action they illustrate the truth that unity is the law of their existence: that to serve and minister to unity is the one end of

their being. We ought therefore never to allow our minds to think that variety of gifts in the Church has any other course or tends to any other effect than unity. We see how nature verifies this truth; but grace does so equally.

One inspiring Spirit works and manifests Himself in manifold forms and in myriads of members; but they are all nevertheless only illustrations and applications of His own essential unity. And while unity flows in variety, and variety illustrates and subserves unity, yet, notwithstanding, each has its own special work and service which may not be ignored, altered, mutilated, or substituted or destroyed..

As well, says St. Paul, may you attempt to substitute or change an eye for the service and duty of the ear, as to change and alter its specific service for which each gift is placed and set by God Himself in the Body. To say to any gift, “we have no need of thee”, he says, is making a schism in the Body, and schisms which begin *in* a body soon develop themselves and become schisms *from* the Body.

How do we all stand condemned by this truth? Have we not said for ages, “we have no need of any of the gifts at all?” And have not, even we, the anointed, been quite content to rest satisfied without them? Surely then we are verily guilty of this sin of making

schism in the Body of Christ. Surely we are all found involved in this sin of saying to some of these members and memberships, “we have no need of you”. Harmony is the absence of discord and shows how vast a multitude of sounds can concur in one melody. So, likewise, all the various gifts of the Holy Ghost, throughout all the ages and generations, are but like the many-toned organ with its multitude of pipes and stops which the breath of the One Spirit inspires to all eternity for the service and glory of God. For they not only subserve the general good of the whole, but each is made to be the complement to supply that measure of grace without which there would be a discord and lack in each and all.

How then should we covet all the gifts; for those we have received must suffer injury for lack of the aid and co-operation of those which are yet withheld from us. They are all meant for mutual aid and support, and none can be absent without loss and detriment to what is already in existence. Surely, then, this should be an additional motive to urge us forward in earnestly desiring and seeking the restoration of all.

Moreover, as we see in any living, organised body, that no one member has any independence of the rest, but that all are made naturally interdependent, and so, truly members one of another as well as members of the Head and of the Body; so also is it in

the united interdependence of one class of gifts upon another: of the ministries on the gifts, and the gifts on the ministries: and of the virtues on all. Here again is another motive for our pleading with God to add to wisdom, prophecy and discerning of spirits; to faith, miracles and healings - and so of all the rest: they are all knops that should appear together, growing in and out of the candlestick of God.

This truth then of their being but dividings of powers out of a common reservoir or fountain ought to drive us to that Fountain from whence all flows. He who has vouchsafed to us so much already will not withhold from us all that yet remains behind.

Finally. In that wonderful unity which Christ, His Church and its members form, there is of necessity a deep and undefinable sympathy. All are made to realise that they are partakers of the honour and strength, or in the sufferings and weakness of every member; and hence, in regard to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, how must one gift lack through the absence and weakness of the rest. Who can tell what amount of life and vigour prophecy would attain to if miracles and healings were again exercised amongst us? Let us then enter into the realisation of our loss and weakness while any gift which belongs to Christ's [18] Body is hidden or lies dormant. Surely in our Prayer Meetings we should fill our mouths with arguments in

this behalf that the Lord may stir up His great power and come among us and help us. Let us be jealous for the glory of the Lord, and He will even hear and answer us. Surely it is for the recovery of all these blessed gifts, along with the perfect ministries, that the Lord has set us apart. If we fail here we fail in a most vital point and in the special use and service for which the Lord has chosen us.

Let us then compass the throne of grace patiently, constantly, and with full assurance of faith, that the Lord would vouchsafe to pour out His Spirit in greater measure and in clearer manifestation, so that all may be left without excuse who refuse His message and reject the help He sends to them in this time of need and distress. And who knows if He will not repent and leave a blessing behind Him, opening the windows of Heaven and pouring out such a blessing as there shall not be room enough to receive and contain it?

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S U M M A R Y

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