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## CHARISMATA IN THE FIRST FIVE CENTURIES

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There is neither scriptural nor anecdotal evidence that the gifts of the Holy Spirit died out at the end of the apostolic era. Biblically, it is impossible to prove the case for cessationism. God established charismata in the Church (1 Corinthians 12:27-28) and all believers are urged to pray for them (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1). It is equally impossible to prove a cessationist viewpoint historically. It simply does not fit the facts. Charismata did not cease at the end of the first century. There is significant evidence of them being practised well after the close of the New Testament canon until the fourth and fifth centuries.

It is true that by the time of Augustine, Chrysostom and Jerome, their incidence had waned and they were the exception rather than the rule. Glossolalia in particular seems to have disappeared. Nevertheless, although Augustine could write that people no longer spoke in tongues when the Spirit came on them, he could also appeal to numerous contemporary miracles to authenticate his faith. Some of these were attributed to the influence of the relics or shrines of martyrs and involved the use of blessed clothing. Traditionally, Protestants have had difficulty accepting these phenomena, because of the danger of the focus being taken from Christ on to some human or even idolatrous source, although there is some biblical precedent for them (2 Kings 4:31-35; 2 Kings 13:21; Acts 19:11,12). As if anticipating objections, Augustine is careful to explain that he believed the power was always from God.

Notwithstanding the many phenomena Augustine describes, other writers such as Chrysostom began to argue that the fruit of the Spirit were more important than the gifts. This changing theology was partly the result of the need to defend the faith philosophically from both heretic and heathen. Signs and wonders would not do, as these could also be produced by the opposition. Only genuine love could not be counterfeited. Furthermore, was it not better to die for the faith than to raise the dead? To renounce wealth than to produce it? To save a sinner than to cast out demons? And did not Jesus say that it was by our love, not our miracles, that we would be known as disciples?

On the other hand, as John Wesley was later to allege, another factor was the growing coldness of the church. In his published sermon, 'The More Excellent Way,' he wrote—

It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were common in the church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when the Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian... The cause of this was not (as has been vulgarly supposed) 'because there was no more occasion for them,' because all the world was become Christian. This is a miserable mistake; not a twentieth part of it was then nominally Christian. The real cause was, 'the love of many', almost of all Christians, so called, was 'waxed cold'... This was the real cause why the

extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian Church; because Christians were turned heathen again, and had only a dead form left.<sup>1</sup>

Another factor may have been a reaction against the rise of the second century Montanists in Phrygia. Led by one Montanus, who promoted two women as prophets and whose teaching was seen to focus unduly on both asceticism and eschatology, they were regarded as an extremist group by many of their contemporaries. It is important to note that it was not the fact that the Montanists prophesied that was an issue: prophets were openly accepted in the second century. It was the nature of their prophecies and their accompanying life style that caused alarm. On the other hand, the notable Christian lawyer Tertullian embraced Montanist teaching and attempted to demonstrate its orthodoxy. In the quotations included in this anthology, two very different views of Montanism are presented.

Overall, it is fascinating to trace the shift from the New Testament approach to that of the Post-Nicene Fathers.<sup>2</sup> Here follows a selection of documents illustrating the trend—

### 1. The Didache (c.120)

*The Didache is a second century document purporting to contain the teaching (didache) of the Twelve Apostles. It openly recognises the existence of apostles and prophets and attempts to set down guidelines for regulating their activities.*

But concerning the apostles and prophets, act according to the decree of the Gospel. Let every apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain more than one day; or two days, if there's a need. But if he remains three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goes away, let him take nothing but bread until he lodges. If he asks for money, he is a false prophet. And every prophet who speaks in the Spirit you shall neither try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven. But not every one who speaks in the Spirit is a prophet; but only if he holds the ways of the Lord. Therefore from their ways shall the false prophet and the prophet be known.

### 2. Quadratus (c.100)

*Little is known of Quadratus other than this brief reference in Eusebius.*

Among those that were celebrated at that time was Quadratus, who, report says, was renowned along with the daughters of Philip for his prophetic gifts. And there were many others besides these who were known in those days, and who occupied the first place among the successors of the apostles... For a great many wonderful works were done through them by the power of the divine Spirit, so that at the first hearing whole multitudes of men eagerly embraced the religion of the Creator of the universe (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, 37, c.326)

### 3. Ignatius (died c.117)

*Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was martyred in Rome. En route to that city, he wrote seven letters which have survived to this day. The reference to spiritual gifts in this extract from the*

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<sup>1</sup> Wesley, *Works* Vol 8, 1996, pp. 26f.

<sup>2</sup> The quotations that follow are selected from A.Roberts and J.Donaldson (eds), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* The Sage Digital Library, Albany, Oregon: Sage Software, 1996 and P.Schaff (ed), *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* The Sage Digital Library, Albany, Oregon:Sage Software, 1996.

*record of his martyrdom is not conclusive, but does suggest an expectation of the gifts of the Spirit.*

And after a great deal of suffering he came to Smyrna, where he disembarked with great joy, and hastened to see the holy Polycarp, [formerly] his fellow-disciple, and [now] bishop of Smyrna. For they had both, in old times, been disciples of St. John the Apostle. Being then brought to him, and having communicated to him some spiritual gifts, and glorying in his bonds, he entreated of him to labour along with him for the fulfilment of his desire; earnestly indeed asking this of the whole Church (for the cities and Churches of Asia had welcomed the holy man through their bishops, and presbyters, and deacons, all hastening to meet him, if by any means they might receive from him some spiritual gift), but above all, the holy Polycarp, that, by means of the wild beasts, he soon disappearing from this world, might be manifested before the face of Christ (*Martyrdom of Ignatius*, 3).

#### **4. Justin Martyr (c.100-165)**

*As his name suggests, Justin Martyr died for his faith. As a fine Christian apologist, he attempted to defend the gospel against its critics and opponents. Here he clearly states that gifts of prophecy may be found among his fellow Christians.*

For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation (Israel) have been transferred to us. And just as there were false prophets contemporaneous with your holy prophets, so are there now many false teachers amongst us, of whom our Lord forewarned us to beware; so that in no respect are we deficient, since we know that He foreknew all that would happen to us after His resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven...

I have already said, and do again say, that it had been prophesied that this would be done by Him after His ascension to heaven. It is accordingly said, 'He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, He gave gifts unto the sons of men.' And again, in another prophecy it is said: 'And it shall come to pass after this, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and on My servants, and on My handmaids, and they shall prophesy.' Now, it is possible to see amongst us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God... (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 82, 87, 88, c.150).

#### **5. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (c. 180)**

*Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, left extensive writings attacking heresy which tell us much about the early Church and its beliefs and practices. In these extracts, he plainly declares that glossolalia, divine healing and even raising of the dead were practised in his day.*

Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform [miracles], so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years.

And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, [scattered] throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practising deception upon any, nor taking any reward from

them on account of such miraculous interpositions]. For as she has received freely from God, freely also does she minister... (*Against Heresies*, II, 32, 4).

For this reason does the apostle declare, 'We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,' terming those persons 'perfect' who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used himself to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the church who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God whom also the apostle terms 'spiritual,' they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit (*Against Heresies*, V, 6, 1).

## 6. Montanus (c.150)

*Montanus was a Phrygian believer whose followers practised spiritual gifts such as prophesying and glossolalia. Most of what we know about him was written by his enemies and may therefore not be as objective or reliable as it could be. If these were the only extant records, our view of Montanism would be extremely negative. However, the renowned Latin theologian Tertullian presents a more positive view, as can be seen below. It is interesting that when denouncing Montanist prophecies, Eusebius still quotes Paul as teaching that genuine prophecy would continue until the end of the age.*

There is said to be a certain village called Ardabau in that part of Mysia, which borders upon Phrygia. There first, they say, when Gratus was proconsul of Asia, a recent convert, Montanus by name, through his unquenchable desire for leadership, gave the adversary opportunity against him. And he became beside himself, and being suddenly in a sort of frenzy and ecstasy, he raved, and began to babble and utter strange things [glossolalia?], prophesying in a manner contrary to the constant custom of the Church handed down by tradition from the beginning. Some of those who heard his spurious utterances at that time were indignant, and they rebuked him as one that was possessed, and that was under the control of a demon, and was led by a deceitful spirit, and was distracting the multitude; and they forbade him to talk, remembering the distinction drawn by the Lord and his warning to guard watchfully against the coming of false prophets.

But others imagining themselves possessed of the Holy Spirit and of a prophetic gift, were elated and not a little puffed up; and forgetting the distinction of the Lord, they challenged the mad and insidious and seducing spirit, and were cheated and deceived by him. In consequence of this, he could no longer be held in check, so as to keep silence. Thus by artifice, or rather by such a system of wicked craft, the devil, devising destruction for the disobedient, and being unworthily honoured by them, secretly excited and inflamed their understandings which had already become estranged from the true faith. And he stirred up besides two women, and filled them with the false spirit, so that they talked wildly and unreasonably and strangely [glossolalia?] like the person already mentioned. And the spirit pronounced them blessed as they rejoiced and gloried in him, and puffed them up by the magnitude of his promises. But sometimes he rebuked them openly in a wise and faithful manner, that he might seem to be a reprover. But those of the Phrygians that were deceived were few in number (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, 16).

A little further on in the same work he (Miltiades) gives a list of those who prophesied under the new covenant, among whom he enumerates a certain Ammia and Quadratus, saying, 'But the false prophet falls into an ecstasy, in which he is without shame or fear. Beginning with purposed ignorance, he passes on, as has been stated, involuntary madness of soul. They cannot show that one of the old or one of the new prophets was thus carried away in spirit.

And again after a little he says: 'For if after Quadratus and Ammia in Philadelphia, as they assert, the women with Montanus received the prophetic gift, let them show who among them

received it from Montanus and the women. For the apostle thought it necessary that the prophetic gift should continue in all the Church until the final coming. But they cannot show it, though this is the fourteenth year since the death of Maximilla' (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, 17).

For although the Lord said, 'Provide neither gold, nor silver, neither two coats,' these men, in complete opposition, transgress in respect to the possession of the forbidden things. For we will show that those whom they call prophets and martyrs gather their gain not only from rich men, but also from the poor, and orphans, and widows. But if they are confident, let them stand up and discuss these matters, that if convicted they may hereafter cease transgressing. For the fruits of the prophet must be tried; 'for the tree is known by its fruit...'

If they deny that their prophets have received gifts, let them acknowledge this: that if they are convicted of receiving them, they are not prophets. And we will bring a multitude of proofs of this. But it is necessary that all the fruits of a prophet should be examined. Tell me, does a prophet dye his hair? Does a prophet stain his eyelids? Does a prophet delight in adornment? Does a prophet play with tables and dice? Does a prophet lend on usury? Let them confess whether these things are lawful or not; but I will show that they have been done by them (Apollonius quoted in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, 18).

Others, again (the Montanists), that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John's Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete; but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit. Wretched men indeed! who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the gift of prophecy from the Church; acting like those (the Encratitae) who, on account of such as come in hypocrisy, hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren. We must conclude, moreover, that these men (the Montanists) cannot admit the Apostle Paul either. For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks expressly of prophetic gifts, and recognizes men and women prophesying in the Church (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III, 11, 9).

We have now among us a sister whose lot is has been to be favoured with gifts of revelation, which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic vision amid the sacred rites of the Lord's Day in the church; she converses with angels, and sometimes even with the Lord; she both sees and hears mysterious communications; some men's hearts she discerns, and she obtains directions for healing for such as need them... All her communications are examined with the most scrupulous order that their truth may be probed... For her witness there was God; and the apostle (Paul) is a fitting guarantee that there were to be spiritual gifts in the church (Tertullian, *On the Soul*, 9, c.200 AD).

## 7. Tertullian (c.160-215)

*Tertullian was the first Christian theologian to write extensively in Latin. Thirty-one of his Latin works survive. His Apology is a Christian classic. He invented numerous theological terms (including 'Trinity') and is famous for statements such as, 'The blood of martyrs is seed' and, 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?' Historians have sometimes been surprised that a scholar like Tertullian should have joined the Montanists, but his joining them may indicate that they were more biblical than their critics were willing to allow. In his debate with Marcion, part of which is quoted here, Tertullian states confidently that he can readily produce examples of charismata among third century Christians.*

Now hear how he declared that by Christ Himself, when returned to heaven, these spiritual gifts were to be sent: 'He ascended up on high,' that is, into heaven; 'He led captivity captive,' meaning death or slavery of man; 'He gave gifts to the sons of men,' that is, the

gratuities, which we call *charismata*. He says specifically ‘*sons of men,*’ and not men promiscuously; thus exhibiting to us those who were the children of men truly so called, choice men, apostles...

Now was absolutely fulfilled that promise of the Spirit which was given by the word of Joel: ‘In the last days will I pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and their sons and their daughters shall prophesy; and upon my servants and upon my handmaids will I pour out of my Spirit.’ Since, then, the Creator promised the gift of His Spirit in the latter days; and since Christ has in these last days appeared as the dispenser of spiritual gifts (as the apostle says, ‘When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son;’ and again, ‘This I say, brethren, that the time is short’), it evidently follows in connection with this prediction of the last days, that this gift of the Spirit belongs to Him who is the Christ of the predictors.

Now compare the Spirit’s specific graces, as they are described by the apostle, and promised by the prophet Isaiah. ‘To one is given,’ says he, ‘by the Spirit the word of wisdom;’ this we see at once is what Isaiah declared to be ‘the spirit of wisdom.’ ‘To another, the word of knowledge;’ this will be ‘the (prophet’s) spirit of understanding and counsel.’ ‘To another, faith by the same Spirit;’ this will be ‘the spirit of religion and the fear of the Lord.’ ‘To another, the gifts of healing, and to another the working of miracles;’ this will be ‘the spirit of might.’ ‘To another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues;’ this will be ‘the spirit of knowledge.’

See how the apostle agrees with the prophet both in making the distribution of the one Spirit, and in interpreting His special graces. This, too, I may confidently say: he who has likened the unity of our body throughout its manifold and divers members to the compacting together of the various gifts of the Spirit, shows also that there is but one Lord of the human body and of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit, (according to the apostle’s showing,) meant not that the service of these gifts should be in the body, nor did He place them in the human body); and on the subject of the superiority of love above all these gifts, He even taught the apostle that it was the chief commandment, just as Christ has shown it to be: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart and soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thine own self.’

When he mentions the fact that ‘*it is written in the law,*’ how that the Creator would speak with other tongues and other lips, whilst confirming indeed the gift of tongues by such a mention, he yet cannot be thought to have affirmed that the gift was that of another God by his reference to the Creator’s prediction. In precisely the same manner, when enjoining on women silence in the church, that they speak not for the mere sake of learning (although that even they have the right of prophesying, he has already shown when he covers the woman that prophesies with a veil), he goes to the law for his sanction that woman should be under obedience...

But that we may now leave the subject of spiritual gifts, facts themselves will be enough to prove which of us acts rashly in claiming them for his God, and whether it is possible that they are opposed to our side, even if the Creator promised them for His Christ who is not yet revealed, as being destined only for the Jews, to have their operations in His time, in His Christ, and among His people.

Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his God, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer—only let it be by the Spirit, in an ecstasy, that is, in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him; let him show to me also, that any woman of boastful tongue in his community has ever prophesied from amongst those specially holy sisters of his. Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty, and they

agree, too, with the rules, and the dispensations, and the instructions of the Creator; therefore without doubt the Christ, and the Spirit, and the apostle, belong severally to my God. Here, then, is my frank avowal for any one who cares to require it (*Against Marcion*, V, 8).

### 8. Origen (c.185-254)

*Origen was one of the first textual critics of the Bible and one of the first systematic theologians. He is attributed with up to 6000 works. He established schools for studying the Bible and proved well able to argue the faith from a philosophical viewpoint. He was tortured for his faith late in life and died soon after. Here he notes that 'traces' of spiritual gifts may still be found in the Church.*

The prodigious miracles... may be proved to have happened... traces of them still remain among those who live according to the will of the Word...

Traces of the Holy Spirit who appeared in the form of a dove are still preserved among Christians. They charm demons away and perform many cures and perceive certain things about the future according to the will of the Word (*Against Celsus*, I, 2, 46. See also 7:8. c.250)

### 9. Cyprian (c.200-258)

*Cyprian was a bishop of Carthage who dedicated his life to celibacy, poverty and the study of Scripture. He was more a pastor than a theologian. In this passage, he writes of healing and deliverance from demons.*

But if you keep the way of innocence, the way of righteousness, if you walk with a firm and steady step, if, depending on God with your whole strength and with your whole heart, you will only be what you have begun to be, liberty and power to do is given you in proportion to the increase of your spiritual grace. For there is not, as is the case with earthly benefits, any measure or stint in the dispensing of the heavenly gift. The Spirit freely flowing forth is restrained by no limits, is checked by no closed barriers within certain bounded spaces; it flows perpetually, it is exuberant in its affluence. Let our heart only be athirst, and be ready to receive: in the degree in which we bring to it a capacious faith, in that measure we draw from it an overflowing grace.

Thence is given power, with modest chastity, with a sound mind, with a simple voice, with unblemished virtue, that is able to quench the virus of poisons for the healing of the sick, to purge out the stains of foolish souls by restored health, to bid peace to those that are at enmity, repose to the violent, gentleness to the unruly—by startling threats of force to avow themselves the impure and vagrant spirits that have betaken themselves into the bodies of men whom they purpose to destroy, to drive them with heavy blows to come out of them, to stretch them out struggling, howling, groaning with increase of constantly renewing pain, to beat them with scourges, to roast them with fire: the matter is carded on there, but is not seen; the strokes inflicted are hidden, but the penalty is manifest. Thus, in respect of what we have already begun to be, the Spirit that we have received possesses its own liberty of action; while in that we have not yet changed our body and members, the carnal view is still darkened by the clouds of this world. (*To Donatus*, 5, AD 246).

### 10. Hippolytus (c.170-236)

*Hippolytus was an elder and teacher in the church at Rome. He has the interesting distinction of being the first to produce a table for calculating the date for Easter. He was martyred for his faith. His reference here to 'the power of the Holy Ghost' is not specific, but may indicate charismatic expectations.*

‘And hath raised her seven pillars;’ that is, the fragrant grace of the all-holy Spirit, as Isaiah says: ‘And the seven spirits of God shall rest upon Him,’ But others say that the seven pillars are the seven divine orders which sustain the creation by His holy and inspired teaching; to wit, the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, the hierarchs, the hermits, the saints, and the righteous. And the phrase, ‘She hath killed her beasts,’ denotes the prophets and martyrs who in every city and country are slain like sheep every day by the unbelieving, in behalf of the truth, and cry aloud, ‘For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we were counted as sheep for the slaughter’... And again, ‘And to those that want understanding she said’ — that is, to those who have not yet obtained the power of the Holy Ghost—‘Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled for you;’ by which is meant, that He gave His divine flesh and honoured blood to us, to eat and to drink it for the remission of sins (*On Proverbs 9:1*).

### 11. Novatian (c.200-c.258)

*Novatian was the author of the first full-length study on the Trinity. He also took a hard line on the readmittance to the Church of those who had renounced the faith under Roman persecution. In this selection, he clearly refers to gifts of the Spirit in the Church of his day.*

Moreover, the order of reason, and the authority of the faith in the disposition of the words and in the Scriptures of the Lord, admonish us after these things to believe also on the Holy Spirit, once promised to the Church, and in the appointed occasions of times given. For He was promised by Joel the prophet, but given by Christ. ‘In the last days,’ says the prophet, ‘I will pour out of my Spirit upon my servants and my handmaids...’ This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, offers discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of charismata; and thus makes the Lord’s Church everywhere, and in all, perfected and completed. This is He who, after the manner of a dove, when our Lord was baptized, came and abode upon Him, dwelling in Christ full and entire, and not maimed in any measure or portion; but with His whole overflow copiously distributed and sent forth, so that from Him others might receive some enjoyment of His graces: the source of the entire Holy Spirit remaining in Christ, so that from Him might be drawn streams of gifts and works, while the Holy Spirit dwelt affluently in Christ... (*Concerning the Trinity*, 29, AD 257).

### 12. Eusebius (c.265-339)

*Eusebius of Caesarea is best known today for his monumental Historia Ecclesiastica or History of the Church which appeared around AD 326. This work tells us much of what we know about the first three centuries of Christian history. His record of martyrdoms, disputes, personalities, heresies and events is both unparalleled and invaluable. Eusebius was also a great admirer of the emperor Constantine. Here he notes some unusual miracles that occurred in the second and third centuries.*

And in another place the same author (Irenaeus) writes: ‘As also we hear that many brethren in the Church possess prophetic gifts, and speak, through the Spirit, with all kinds of tongues, and bring to light the secret things of men for their good, and declare the mysteries of God. So much in regard to the fact that various gifts remained among those who were worthy even until that time (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, 7, c.326).

The followers of Montanus, Alcibiades and Theodotus in Phrygia were now first giving wide circulation to their assumption in regard to prophecy—for the many other miracles that, through the gift of God, were still wrought in the different churches caused their prophesying to be readily credited by many—and as dissension arose concerning them, the brethren in Gaul set forth their own prudent and most orthodox judgment (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, 3).

The citizens of that parish mention many other miracles of Narcissus, on the tradition of the brethren who succeeded him; among which they relate the following wonder as performed by him. They say that the oil once failed while the deacons were watching through the night at the great paschal vigil. Thereupon the whole multitude being dismayed, Narcissus directed those who attended to the lights, to draw water and bring it to him. This being immediately done he prayed over the water, and with firm faith in the Lord, commanded them to pour it into the lamps. And when they had done so, contrary to all expectation by a wonderful and divine power, the nature of the water was changed into that of oil. A small portion of it has been preserved even to our day by many of the brethren there as a memento of the wonder (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, 9).

But Sanctus also endured marvellously and superhumanly all the outrages which he suffered. While the wicked men hoped, by the continuance and severity of his tortures, to wring something from him which he ought not to say, he girded himself against them with such firmness that he would not even tell his name, or the nation or city to which he belonged, or whether he was bond or free, but answered in the Roman tongue to all their questions, 'I am a Christian...' There arose therefore on the part of the governor and his tormentors a great desire to conquer him but having nothing more that they could do to him, they finally fastened red-hot brazen plates to the most tender parts of his body... For when the wicked men tortured him a second time after some days, supposing that with his body swollen and inflamed to such a degree that he could not bear the touch of a hand, if they should again apply the same instruments, they would overcome him, or at least by his death under his sufferings others would be made afraid, not only did not this occur, but, contrary to all human expectation, his body arose and stood erect in the midst of the subsequent torments, and resumed its original appearance and the use of its limbs, so that, through the grace of Christ, these second sufferings became to him, not torture, but healing (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, V, I).

### 13. Hilary of Poitiers (c.300-367)

*Only three years after his conversion, Hilary was made bishop of Poitiers, his home town. He was a vigorous advocate of orthodoxy against Arianism (hence his treatise on the Trinity) and found himself banished by the Emperor for his pains. Here is a discussion of the gifts of the Spirit, which he clearly sees as continuing in his day.*

For the Apostle goes on to say, 'Now there are diversities of gifts, but there is the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministrations but one and the same Lord; and there are diversities of workings but the same God, Who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for that which profiteth.' In this passage before us we perceive a fourfold statement: in the diversity of gifts it is the same Spirit, in the diversity of ministrations it is the very same Lord, in the diversity of workings it is the same God, and in the bestowal of that which is profitable there is a manifestation of the Spirit. And in order that the bestowal of what is profitable might be recognized in the manifestation of the Spirit, he continues: 'To one indeed is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing in the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues...'

For the gift of the Spirit is manifest, where wisdom makes utterance and the words of life are heard, and where there is the knowledge that comes of God-given insight, lest after the fashion of beasts through ignorance of God we should fail to know the Author of our life; or by faith in God, lest by not believing the Gospel of God, we should be outside His Gospel; or by the gift of healings, that by the cure of diseases we should bear witness to His grace Who bestoweth these things; or by the working of miracles, that what we do may be understood to be the power of God, or by prophecy, that through our understanding of doctrine we might be

known to be taught of God; or by discerning of spirits, that we should not be unable to tell whether any one speaks with a holy or a perverted spirit; or by kinds of tongues, that the speaking in tongues may be bestowed as a sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit; or by the interpretation of tongues, that the faith of those that hear may not be imperiled through ignorance, since the interpreter of a tongue explains the tongue to those who are ignorant of it. Thus in all these things distributed to each one to profit withal there is the manifestation of the Spirit, the gift of the Spirit being apparent through these marvellous advantages bestowed upon each...

For God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, in whom is the word of wisdom; secondly prophets, in whom is the gift of knowledge, thirdly teachers, in whom is the doctrine of faith; next mighty works, among which are the healing of diseases, the power to help, governments by the prophets, and gifts of either speaking or interpreting divers kinds of tongues. Clearly these are the Church's agents of ministry and work of whom the body of Christ consists; and God has ordained them (*On the Trinity*, VIII, 29, 30, 34).

#### 14. Cyril of Jerusalem (c.310-386)

*Cyril was a champion of the orthodox faith against Arianism. He was twice banished for his stand. His 24 Catechetical Lectures are his major surviving work. His comments here on 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 seem to modify the gifts to some extent, but they do not dismiss them.*

And though He (the Spirit) is One in nature, yet many are the virtues which by the will of God and in the Name of Christ He works. For He employs the tongue of one man for wisdom; the soul of another He enlightens by prophecy; to another He gives power to drive away devils; to another He gives to interpret the divine Scriptures. He strengthens one man's self-command; He teaches another the way to give alms; another He teaches to fast and discipline himself; another He teaches to despise the things of the body; another He trains for martyrdom: diverse in different men, yet not diverse from Himself, as it is written, 'But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healing, in the same Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits; and to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will' (*Catechetical Lectures*, #16, 12)

#### 15. Basil the Great (c.329-379)

*One of the renowned Cappadocian Fathers, Basil was a fervent advocate of asceticism, a strong opponent of Arianism and an able leader as a bishop. He built elaborate and complex hostels for the poor and a well-organised pastoral centre. In this excerpt he relates his personal experience of the healing power of God and other spiritual gifts.*

One of the wonders which concern him (my father) was that he suffered from sickness and bodily pain... This (Easter) was the time of his sufferings... His whole frame was on fire with an excessive, burning fever, his strength had failed, he was unable to take food, his sleep had departed from him, he was in the greatest distress, and agitated by palpitations. Within his mouth, the palate and the whole of the upper surface was so completely and painfully ulcerated, that it was difficult and dangerous to swallow even water. The skill of physicians, the prayers, most earnest though they were, of his friends, and every possible attention were alike of no avail...

We were in the temple, mingling supplications with the sacred rites, for, in despair, of all others, we had betaken ourselves to the Great Physician... O those tears! which were shed at that time by all the people. O voices, and cries, and hymns blended with the psalmody!

And though you, my hearers, may shudder, do not disbelieve: for that would be impious... He was raised up by Him who quickeneth the dead... At first he moved slightly, then more decidedly...

What a miracle!... On the new day of the feast, as we call the first Sunday after the festival of the Resurrection, he entered the temple and inaugurated his life which had been preserved, with the full complement of clergy, and offered the sacrifice of thanksgiving.

The same miracle occurred in the case of my mother not long afterwards (*Funeral Oration on the death of his father*, 28-30).

And is it not plain and incontestable that the ordering of the Church is effected through the Spirit? For He gave, it is said, 'in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues,' for this order is ordained in accordance with the division of the gifts that are of the Spirit (*De Spiritu Sancto*, XVI, 39).

Working of miracles, and gifts of healing are through the Holy Spirit. Demons were driven out by the Spirit of God (*De Spiritu Sancto*, XIX, 48).

For as the art is potentially in the artist, but only in operation when he is working in accordance with it, so also the Spirit is ever present with those that are worthy, but works, as need requires, in prophecies, or in healings, or in some other actual carrying into effect of His potential action (*De Spiritu Sancto*, XXVI, 61).

I see clearly that, even in the case of the words of the Holy Spirit, the investigation of the terms is to be attempted not by every one, but by him who has the spirit of discernment, as the Apostle has taught us, in the differences of gifts—'For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits.' If, therefore, my gifts are spiritual, he who wishes to judge them must show proof of his own possession of the gift of 'discerning of spirits' (Letter CCIV, *To the Neocaesareans*).

## 16. Gregory of Nazianzus (330-389)

*One of the three Cappadocian Fathers, Gregory was a reluctant bishop, preferring a more quiet life. He was, nevertheless, a powerful orator and a vigorous opponent of Arianism. His friend Basil here tells of the way the Spirit worked in his life.*

But where shall I rank the great Gregory, and the words uttered by him? Shall we not place among apostles and prophets a man who walked by the same Spirit as they; who never through all his days diverged from the footprints of the saints; who maintained, as long as he lived, the exact principles of evangelical citizenship? I am sure that we shall do the truth a wrong if we refuse to number that soul with the people of God, shining as it did like a beacon in the Church of God; for by the fellow-working of the Spirit the power which he had over demons was tremendous, and so gifted was he with the grace of the word 'for obedience to the faith among... the nations,' that, although only seventeen Christians were handed over to him, he brought the whole people alike in town and country through knowledge to God.

He too by Christ's mighty name commanded even rivers to change their course, and caused a lake, which afforded a ground of quarrel to some covetous brethren, to dry up. Moreover his predictions of things to come were such as in no wise to fall short of those of the great prophets. To recount all his wonderful works in detail would be too long a task. By the superabundance of gifts, wrought in him by the Spirit in all power and in signs and in marvels, he was styled a second Moses by the very enemies of the Church. Thus in all that he through grace accomplished, alike by word and deed, a light seemed ever to be shining, token of the heavenly power from the unseen which followed him (Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, XXIX, 74).

### 17. Ambrose of Milan (c.339-397)

*When he was made bishop, Ambrose's first act was to give away all his wealth. He was an outstanding preacher and teacher. It was he who influenced Augustine of Hippo who was to become even more renowned than he. He boldly withstood the Emperor when he thought he was at fault. In the following excerpts Ambrose argues that the Church should continue to do the same works that Jesus did.*

Lastly, it is the same God Who worketh all in all, that you may know that there is no diversity of operation between God the Father and the Holy Spirit; since those things which the Spirit works, God the Father also works, 'Who worketh all in all.' For while God the Father worketh all in all, yet 'to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healings, in the one Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of sayings; but all these worketh one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one as He will.'

There is then no doubt but that those things which the Father worketh, the Spirit worketh also. Nor does He work in accordance with a command, as he who hears in bodily fashion, but voluntarily, as being free in His own will, not the servant of the power of another. For He does not obey as being bidden, but as the giver He is the controller of His own gifts.

We can, then, easily find, if we will consider, that this royal power is by the witness of the Scriptures attributed to the Holy Spirit; and it will be made clear that all the apostles were not only disciples of Christ, but also ministers of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As also the teacher of the Gentiles tells us, when he says: 'God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers; then miracles, the gift of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues.'

See, God set apostles, and set prophets and teachers, gave the gift of healings, which you find above to be given by the Holy Spirit; gave divers kinds of tongues. But yet all are not apostles, all are not prophets, all are not teachers. Not all, says he, have the gift of healings, nor do all, says he, speak with tongues. For the whole of the divine gifts cannot exist in each several man; each, according to his capacity, receives that which he either desires or deserves. But the power of the Trinity, which is lavish of all graces, is not like this weakness (*On the Holy Spirit* II, 12, 139-140, 149-150).

It is the will of the Lord that His disciples should possess great powers; it is His will that the same things which He did when on earth should be done in His Name by His servants. For He said: 'Ye shall do greater things than these.' He gave them power to raise the dead. And whereas He could Himself have restored to Saul the use of his sight, He nevertheless sent him to His disciple Ananias, that by his blessing Saul's eyes might be restored, the sight of which he had lost. Peter also He bade walk with Himself on the sea, and because he faltered He blamed him for lessening the grace given him by the weakness of his faith. He Who Himself

was the light of the world granted to His disciples to be the light of the world through grace. And because He purposed to descend from heaven and to ascend thither again, He took up Elijah into heaven to restore him again to earth at the time which should please Him. And being baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire, He foreshadowed the Sacrament of Baptism at the hands of John.

And in fine He gave all gifts to His disciples, of whom He said: 'In My Name they shalt cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall do well.' So, then, He gave them all things, but there is no power of man exercised in these things, in which the grace of the divine gift operates (*Concerning Repentance* I, 8, 34-35).

For not without reason do many call this the resurrection of the martyrs. I do not say whether they have risen for themselves, for us certainly the martyrs have risen. You know—nay, you have yourselves seen—that many are cleansed from evil spirits, that very many also, having touched with their hands the robe of the saints, are freed from those ailments which oppressed them; you see that the miracles of old time are renewed, when through the coming of the Lord Jesus grace was more largely shed forth upon the earth, and that many bodies are healed as it were by the shadow of the holy bodies. How many napkins are passed about! how many garments, laid upon the holy relics and endowed with healing power, are claimed! All are glad to touch even the outside thread, and whosoever touches will be made whole (*Letter XXII*, 9).

#### **18. Jerome (c.345-c.419)**

*Jerome is renowned for his translation of the Bible into Latin, the common or 'vulgar' language of the day (the 'Vulgate' version). He wrote voluminously, including commentaries on most biblical books and many letters. He promoted asceticism and monasticism; he lived the last thirty five years of his life in Bethlehem. In this quotation, Jerome notes that it is not prophecy that is rejected, but false prophecy.*

We do not so much reject prophecy—for this is attested by the passion of the Lord—as refuse to receive prophets whose utterances fail to accord with the Scriptures old and new (*Letters*, 'To Marcella', 41, 2, c.385).

#### **19. Augustine (354-430)**

*Augustine of Hippo is the towering figure of the Patristic era. Trained in rhetoric and philosophy, he became, after his renowned conversion, a profound Christian theologian. His Confessions, The City of God and many other works are still widely read today. Churches of all denominations draw on his writings. Here he recounts many stories of healing and miracles the details of which at times seem unusual but which he is careful to attribute to God.*

For even now miracles are wrought in the name of Christ, whether by His sacraments or by the prayers or relics of His saints; but they are not so brilliant and conspicuous as to cause them to be published with such glory as accompanied the former miracles. For the canon of the sacred writings, which behooved to be closed, causes those to be everywhere recited, and to sink into the memory of all the congregations; but these modern miracles are scarcely known even to the whole population in the midst of which they are wrought, and at the best are confined to one spot. For frequently they are known only to a very few persons, while all the rest are ignorant of them, especially if the state is a large one; and when they are reported to other persons in other localities, there is no sufficient authority to give them prompt and unwavering credence, although they are reported to the faithful by the faithful.

The miracle which was wrought at Milan when I was there, and by which a blind man was restored to sight, could come to the knowledge of many; for not only is the city a large one, but also the emperor was there at the time, and the occurrence was witnessed by an immense concourse of people that had gathered to the bodies of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius, which had long lain concealed and unknown, but were now made known to the bishop Ambrose in a dream, and discovered by him. By virtue of these remains the darkness of that blind man was scattered, and he saw the light of day.

But who but a very small number are aware of the cure which was wrought upon Innocentius, ex-advocate of the deputy prefecture, a cure wrought at Carthage, in my presence, and under my own eyes? For when I and my brother Alypius, who were not yet clergymen, though already servants of God, came from abroad, this man received us, and made us live with him, for he and all his household were devotedly pious. He was being treated by medical men for fistulae, of which he had a large number... He had already undergone an operation, and the surgeons were using every means at their command for his relief. In that operation he had suffered long-continued and acute pain; yet, among the many folds of the gut, one had escaped the operators so entirely, that, though they ought to have laid it open with the knife, they never touched it...

Agitated with excessive fear, he was terrified, and grew pale with dread... there arose in the house such a wailing, in sympathy with the excessive despondency of the master, that it seemed to us like the mourning at a funeral, and we could scarcely repress it. Holy men were in the habit of visiting him daily...

When these persons visited him that evening according to their custom, he besought them, with pitiable tears, that they would do him the honour of being present next day at what he judged his funeral rather than his suffering. For such was the terror his former pains had produced, that he made no doubt he would die in the hands of the surgeons. They comforted him, and exhorted him to put his trust in God, and nerve his will like a man. Then we went to prayer; but while we, in the usual way, were kneeling and bending to the ground, he cast himself down, as if some one were hurling him violently to the earth, and began to pray; but in what a manner, with what earnestness and emotion, with what a flood of tears, with what groans and sobs, that shook his whole body, and almost prevented him speaking, who can describe!

...The dreaded day dawned. The servants of God were present, as they had promised to be; the surgeons arrived; all that the circumstances required was ready; the frightful instruments are produced; all look on in wonder and suspense. While those who have most influence with the patient are cheering his fainting spirit, his limbs are arranged on the couch so as to suit the hand of the operator; the knots of the bandages are untied; the part is bared; the surgeon examines it, and, with knife in hand, eagerly looks for the sinus that is to be cut. He searches for it with his eyes; he feels for it with his finger; he applies every kind of scrutiny: he finds a perfectly firm cicatrix!

No words of mine can describe the joy, and praise, and thanksgiving to the merciful and almighty God which was poured from the lips of all, with tears of gladness. Let the scene be imagined rather than described!

In the same city of Carthage lived Innocentia, a very devout woman of the highest rank in the state. She had cancer in one of her breasts, a disease which, as physicians say, is incurable. Ordinarily, therefore, they either amputate... or, that the patient's life may be prolonged a little, though death is inevitable even if somewhat delayed, they abandon all remedies... On the approach of Easter, she was instructed in a dream to wait for the first woman that came out from the baptistry after being baptized, and to ask her to make the sign of Christ upon her sore. She did so, and was immediately cured.

A gouty doctor of the same city... (who) would not defer being washed in the laver of regeneration, was relieved in the very act of baptism, not only of the extraordinary pain he was tortured with, but also of the disease itself, so that, though he lived a long time afterwards, he never suffered from gout...

An old comedian of Curubis was cured at baptism not only of paralysis, but also of hernia, and, being delivered from both afflictions, came up out of the font of regeneration as if he had had nothing wrong with his body...

Hesperius, of a tribunitian family, and a neighbour of our own, has a farm called Zubedi in the Fussalian district; and, finding that his family, his cattle, and his servants were suffering from the malice of evil spirits, he asked our presbyters, during my absence, that one of them would go with him and banish the spirits by his prayers. One went, offered there the sacrifice of the body of Christ, praying with all his might that that vexation might cease. It did cease forthwith, through God's mercy.

Now he had received from a friend of his own some holy earth brought from Jerusalem, where Christ, having been buried, rose again the third day... It so happened that I and Maximinus bishop of Synita, and then my colleague, were in the neighbourhood. Hesperius asked us to visit him, and we did so... He begged that the earth might be buried somewhere, and that the spot should be made a place of prayer where Christians might assemble for the worship of God... There was in that neighbourhood a young countryman who was paralytic, who, when he heard of this, begged his parents to take him without delay to that holy place. When he had been brought there, he prayed, and forthwith went away on his own feet perfectly cured.

There is a country-seat called Victoriana, less than thirty miles from Hippo-regius. At it there is a monument to the Milanese martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius. Thither a young man was carried, who... had been taken possession of by a devil. As he lay at the monument, near death, or even quite like a dead person, the lady of the manor, with her maids and religious attendants, entered the place for evening prayer and praise, as her custom was, and they began to sing hymns.

At this sound the young man, as if electrified, was thoroughly aroused, and with frightful screaming seized the altar, and held it as if he did not dare or were not able to let it go, and as if he were fixed or tied to it; and the devil in him, with loud lamentation, besought that he might be spared, and confessed where and when and how he took possession of the youth. At last, declaring that he would go out of him, he named one by one the parts of his body which he threatened to mutilate as he went out and with these words he departed from the man. But his eye, falling out on his cheek, hung by a slender vein as by a root, and the whole of the pupil which had been black became white.

When this was witnessed by those present (others too had now gathered to his cries, and had all joined in prayer for him), although they were delighted that he had recovered his sanity of mind, yet, on the other hand, they were grieved about his eye, and said he should seek medical advice. But his sister's husband, who had brought him there, said, 'God, who has banished the devil, is able to restore his eye at the prayers of His saints.' Therewith he replaced the eye that was fallen out and hanging, and bound it in its place with his handkerchief as well as he could, and advised him not to loose the bandage for seven days. When he did so, he found it quite healthy. Others also were cured there, but of them it were tedious to speak.

I know that a young woman of Hippo was immediately dispossessed of a devil, on anointing herself with oil, mixed with the tears of the presbyter who had been praying for her. I know

also that a bishop once prayed for a demoniac young man whom he never saw, and that he was cured on the spot.

There was a fellow-townsmen of ours at Hippo, Florentius, an old man, religious and poor, who supported himself as a tailor. Having lost his coat, and not having means to buy another, he prayed to the Twenty Martyrs, who have a very celebrated memorial shrine in our town, begging in a distinct voice that he might be clothed.

Some scoffing young men, who happened to be present, heard him, and followed him with their sarcasm as he went away, as if he had asked the martyrs for fifty pence to buy a coat. But he, walking on in silence, saw on the shore a great fish, gasping as if just cast up, and having secured it with the good-natured assistance of the youths, he sold it for curing to a cook of the name of Catosus, a good Christian man, telling him how he had come by it, and receiving for it three hundred pence, which he laid out in wool, that his wife might exercise her skill upon, and make into a coat for him. But, on cutting up the fish, the cook found a gold ring in its belly; and forthwith, moved with compassion, and influenced, too, by religious fear, gave it up to the man, saying, 'See how the Twenty Martyrs have clothed you.'

When the bishop Projectus was bringing the relics of the most glorious martyr Stephen to the waters of Tibilis, a great concourse of people came to meet him at the shrine. There a blind woman entreated that she might be led to the bishop who was carrying the relics. He gave her the flowers he was carrying. She took them, applied them to her eyes, and forthwith saw. Those who were present were astounded, while she, with every expression of joy, preceded them, pursuing her way without further need of a guide.

*In the original text, several further records of people being healed or delivered of demons by means of prayer offered at tombs or near relics of Christian martyrs, especially Stephen, are included at this point.*

What am I to do? I am so pressed by the promise of finishing this work, that I cannot record all the miracles I know; and doubtless several of our adherents, when they read what I have narrated, will regret that I have omitted so many which they, as well as I, certainly know. Even now I beg these persons to excuse me, and to consider how long it would take me to relate all those miracles, which the necessity of finishing the work I have undertaken forces me to omit. For were I to be silent of all others, and to record exclusively the miracles of healing which were wrought in the district of Calama and of Hippo by means of this martyr—I mean the most glorious Stephen—they would fill many volumes; and yet all even of these could not be collected, but only those of which narratives have been written for public recital.

A woman of rank, Petronia, had been miraculously cured of a serious illness of long standing, in which all medical appliances had failed, and, with the consent of the above named bishop of the place.

The lady is of distinction, nobly born, married to a nobleman. She resides at Carthage. The city is distinguished, the person is distinguished, so that they who make inquiries cannot fail to find satisfaction. Certainly the martyr himself, by whose prayers she was healed, believed on the Son of her who remained a virgin; on Him who came in among the disciples when the doors were shut; in fine—and to this tends all that we have been retailing—on Him who ascended into heaven with the flesh in which He had risen; and it is because he laid down his life for this faith that such miracles were done by his means. Even now, therefore, many miracles are wrought, the same God who wrought those we read of still performing them, by whom He will and as He will; but they are not as well known, nor are they beaten into the memory, like gravel, by frequent reading, so that they cannot fall out of mind...

One miracle was wrought among ourselves, which, though no greater than those I have mentioned, was yet so signal and conspicuous, that I suppose there is no inhabitant of Hippo who did not either see or hear of it, none who could possibly forget it. There were seven brothers and three sisters of a noble family of the Cappadocian Caesarea, who were cursed by their mother, a new-made widow, on account of some wrong they had done her, and which she bitterly resented, and who were visited with so severe a punishment from Heaven, that all of them were seized with a hideous shaking in all their limbs. Unable, while presenting this loathsome appearance, to endure the eyes of their fellow-citizens, they wandered over almost the whole Roman world, each following his own direction.

Two of them came to Hippo, a brother and a sister, Paulus and Palladia, already known in many other places by the fame of their wretched lot. Now it was about fifteen days before Easter when they came, and they came daily to church, and specially to the relics of the most glorious Stephen, praying that God might now be appeased, and restore their former health. There, and wherever they went, they attracted the attention of every one. Some who had seen them elsewhere, and knew the cause of their trembling, told others as occasion offered. Easter arrived, and on the Lord's day, in the morning, when there was now a large crowd present, and the young man was holding the bars of the holy place where the relics were, and praying, suddenly he fell down, and lay precisely as if asleep, but not trembling as he was wont to do even in sleep.

All present were astonished. Some were alarmed, some were moved with pity; and while some were for lifting him up, others prevented them, and said they should rather wait and see what would result. And behold! he rose up, and trembled no more, for he was healed, and stood quite well, scanning those who were scanning him. Who then refrained himself from praising God?

The whole church was filled with the voices of those who were shouting and congratulating him. Then they came running to me, where I was sitting ready to come into the church. One after another they throng in, the last comer telling me as news what the first had told me already; and while I rejoiced and inwardly gave God thanks, the young man himself also enters, with a number of others, falls at my knees, is raised up to receive my kiss. We go in to the congregation: the church was full, and ringing with the shouts of joy, 'Thanks to God! Praised be God!' every one joining and shouting on all sides... and then with still louder voice shouting again. Silence being at last obtained, the customary lessons of the divine Scriptures were read. And when I came to my sermon, I made a few remarks suitable to the occasion and the happy and joyful feeling, not desiring them to listen to me, but rather to consider the eloquence of God in this divine work.

...Meanwhile, their pamphlet being finished, I instructed them to withdraw from the gaze of the people; and I had begun to discuss the whole matter somewhat more carefully, when lo! as I was proceeding, other voices are heard from the tomb of the martyr, shouting new congratulations. My audience turned round, and began to run to the tomb. The young woman, when she had come down from the steps where she had been standing, went to pray at the holy relics, and no sooner had she touched the bars than she, in the same way as her brother, collapsed, as if falling asleep, and rose up cured. While, then, we were asking what had happened, and what occasioned this noise of joy, they came into the basilica where we were, leading her from the martyr's tomb in perfect health.

Then, indeed, such a shout of wonder rose from men and women together, that the exclamations and the tears seemed like never to come to an end. She was led to the place where she had a little before stood trembling. They now rejoiced that she was like her brother, as before they had mourned that she remained unlike him; and as they had not yet uttered their prayers in her behalf, they perceived that their intention of doing so had been speedily heard. They shouted God's praises without words, but with such a noise that our ears could

scarcely bear it. What was there in the hearts of these exultant people but the faith of Christ, for which Stephen had shed his blood? (*City of God*, XXII, 8).

To what do these miracles witness, but to this faith which preaches Christ risen in the flesh, and ascended with the same into heaven? For the martyrs themselves were martyrs, that is to say, witnesses of this faith, drawing upon themselves by their testimony the hatred of the world, and conquering the world not by resisting it, but by dying. For this faith they died, and can now ask these benefits from the Lord in whose name they were slain. For this faith their marvellous constancy was exercised, so that in these miracles great power was manifested as the result.

For if the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life had not taken place in Christ, and were not to be accomplished in His people, as predicted by Christ, or by the prophets who foretold that Christ was to come, why do the martyrs who were slain for this faith which proclaims the resurrection possess such power? For whether God Himself wrought these miracles by that wonderful manner of working by which, though Himself eternal, He produces effects in time; or whether He wrought them by servants, and if so, whether He made use of the spirits of martyrs as He uses men who are still in the body, or effects all these marvels by means of angels, over whom He exerts an invisible, immutable, incorporeal sway, so that what is said to be done by the martyrs is done not by their operation, but only by their prayer and request; or whether, finally, some things are done in one way, others in another, and so that man cannot at all comprehend them—nevertheless these miracles attest this faith which preaches the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life (*City of God*, XXII, 9).

But those are wanting in God's love who do not care for the unity of the Church; and consequently we are right in understanding that the Holy Spirit may be said not to be received except in the Universal Church. For the Holy Spirit is not only given by the laying on of hands amid the testimony of temporal sensible miracles, as He was given in former days to be the credentials of a rudimentary faith, and for the extension of the first beginnings of the Church. For who expects in these days that those on whom hands are laid that they may receive the Holy Spirit should forthwith begin to speak with tongues? But it is understood that invisibly and imperceptibly, on account of the bond of peace, divine love is breathed into their hearts, so that they may be able to say, 'Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.'

But there are many operations of the Holy Spirit, which the same apostle commemorates in a certain passage at such length as he thinks sufficient, and then concludes: 'But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.' Since, then, the sacrament is one thing, which even Simon Magus could have; and the operation of the Spirit is another thing, which is even often found in wicked men, as Saul had the gift of prophecy; and that operation of the same Spirit is a third thing, which only the good can have, as 'the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:' whatever, therefore, may be received by heretics and schismatics, the charity which covereth the multitude of sins is the especial gift of Catholic unity and peace; nor is it found in all that are within that bond, since not all that are within it are of it, as we shall see in the proper place. (*On Baptism, Against the Donatists*, III, 16, AD 400).

And yet you know, as you prove by your quotation, that the Holy Spirit descended in such wise, that those who were then filled with it spake with divers tongues: what was the meaning of that sign and prodigy? Why then is the Holy Spirit given now in such wise, that no one to whom it is given speaks with divers tongues, except because that miracle then prefigured that all nations of the earth should believe, and that thus the gospel should be found to be in every tongue? Just as it was foretold in the psalm so long before: 'There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.' This was said with reference to those men who were destined, after receiving the Holy Spirit, to speak with every kind of tongue. But because this passage

itself signified that the gospel should be found hereafter in all nations and languages, and that the body of Christ should sound forth throughout all the world in every tongue, therefore he goes on to say, 'Their sound is gone out throughout all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world' (*Answers to the Letters of Petilian*, II, 32, 74).

For it is not to be thought that no man knows these things: (not indeed he who thinks he knows, and knows not,) for there be gifts of God, Who bestows on these some one, on those some other, according to the Apostle who says, that 'to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal; to one indeed,' saith he, 'is given by the Spirit discourse of wisdom; to another discourse of science according to the same Spirit; while to another faith in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healings in one Spirit; to one workings of miracles; to one prophecy; to one discerning of spirits; to one kinds of tongues; to one interpretation of discourses. But all these worketh one and the same spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.' Of all these spiritual gifts, which the Apostle hath rehearsed, to whomsoever is given discerning of spirits, the same knoweth these things as they are meet to be known.

Such, we may believe, was that John the Monk, whom the elder Theodosius, the Emperor, consulted concerning the issue of the civil war: seeing he had also the gift of prophecy. For that not each several person has a several one of those gifts, but that one man may have more gifts than one, I make no question. This John, then, when once a certain most religious woman desired to see him, and to obtain this did through her husband make vehement entreaty, refused indeed this request because he had never allowed this to women, but 'Go,' said he, 'tell thy wife, she shall see me this night, but in her sleep.' And so it came to pass: and he gave her advice, whatever was meet to be given to a wedded believing woman. And she, on her awaking, made known to her husband that she had seen a man of God, such as he knew him to be, and what she had been told by him. The person who learned this from them, reported it to me, a grave man and a noble, and most worthy to be believed...

For it chanced at Milan... the demons confessed him and besought him to spare them, he being the while otherwise engaged, and when this was taking place, altogether unwitting of it. Or whether indeed these things are wrought, somewhiles by very presence of the Martyrs, otherwhiles by that of Angels; and whether it be possible, or by what tokens possible, for us to discriminate these two cases; or whether to perceive and to judge of these things none be able, but he which hath that gift through God's Spirit, 'dividing unto every man severally as He will:' the same John, me-thinks, would discourse to me of all these matters... (*On Care to be had for the Dead*, 20, 21).

## 20. John Chrysostom (c.344/354-407)

*The name 'chrysostom' means 'golden-mouthed', a tribute to John's astonishing preaching ability. His simple and genuine faith antagonised the Empress Eudoxia and he was condemned for heresy and twice exiled, a charge for which he was posthumously vindicated. Many of his sermons and letters survive. Here he presents the arguments for the cessation of spiritual gifts in his time, many of which may still be heard today.*

'But the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' This statement is not clear, owing to the cessation of many of the wonders which then used to take place. Wherefore I must needs inform you of the state of things at that time, and in this way the rest of the subject will be cleared. What therefore was the state of things then? God did in those days give to all that were baptized certain excellent gifts, and the name that these had was spirits. For 'the spirits of the prophets,' it says, 'are subject to the prophets.' (1 Corinthians 14:32.) And one had the gift of prophecy and foretold things to come; and another of wisdom, and taught the many; and another of healings, and cured the sick; and another of miracles, and raised the dead; another of tongues, and spoke different languages. And with all

these there was also a gift of prayer, which also was called a spirit, and he that had this prayed for all the people (*Homilies on Paul* #14, on Romans 8:12, 13).

For in the case of the apostles too, there was a 'sound of a mighty wind,' and visions of fiery tongues appeared, but not for the apostles' sake, but because of the Jews who were then present. Nevertheless, even though no sensible signs take place, we receive the things that have been once manifested by them. Since the dove itself at that time therefore appeared, that as in place of a finger (so to say) it might point out to them that were present, and to John, the Son of God. Not however merely on this account, but to teach thee also, that upon thee no less at thy baptism the Spirit comes. But since then we have no need of sensible vision, faith sufficing instead of all. For signs are 'not for them that believe, but for them that believe not.' (*Homily XII*, 3, on Matthew 3:13).

I say, if all the above-mentioned qualities be ours; if we be meek and lowly and merciful; if we be pure, and peacemakers; if hearing reproach, we revile not again, but rather rejoice; then shall we attract all that observe us no less than the miracles do. And all will be kindly disposed towards us, though one be a wild beast, a demon, or what you will (*Homily XV*, on Matthew 5:1, 2).

Let us fear therefore, beloved; and let us take great heed to our life, neither let us account ourselves worse off, in that we do not work miracles now. For that will never be any advantage to us, as neither any disadvantage in our not working them, if we take heed to all virtue (*Homily 24*, 2, on Matthew 7:21).

But the miracles, perhaps, are what ye seek after, such as they wrought when they entered in; the lepers cleansed, the devils driven out, and the dead raised? Nay, but this is the great indication of your high birth, and of your love, that ye should believe God without pledges. And in fact this, and one other thing, were the reasons why God made miracles to cease. I mean, that if when miracles are not performed, they that plume themselves on other advantages—for instance, either on the word of wisdom, or on show of piety—grow vainglorious, are puffed up, are separated one from another; did miracles also take place, how could there but be violent rendings? And that what I say is not mere conjecture, the Corinthians bear witness, who from this cause were divided into many parties.

Do not thou therefore seek signs, but the soul's health. Seek not to see one dead man raised; nay, for thou hast learnt that the whole world is arising. Seek not to see a blind man healed, but behold all now restored unto that better and more profitable sight; and do thou too learn to look chastely, and amend thine eye. For in truth, if we all lived as we ought, workers of miracles would not be admired so much as we by the children of the heathen. For as to the signs, they often carry with them either a notion of mere fancy, or another evil suspicion, although ours be not such. But a pure life cannot admit of any such reproach; yea, all men's mouths are stopped by the acquisition of virtue...

But if thou wouldest work miracles also, be rid of transgressions, and thou hast quite accomplished it. Yea, for sin is a great demon, beloved; and if thou exterminate this, thou hast wrought a greater thing than they who drive out ten thousand demons. Do thou listen to Paul, how he speaks, and prefers virtue to miracles. 'But covet earnestly,' saith he, 'the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.' And when he was to declare this 'way,' he spoke not of raising the dead, not of cleansing of lepers, not of any other such thing; but in place of all these he set charity. Hearken also unto Christ, saying, 'Rejoice not that the demons obey you, but that your names are written in Heaven.' And again before this, 'Many will say to me in that day, Have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils, and done many mighty works, and then I will profess unto them, I know you not.' And when He was about to be crucified, He called His disciples, and said unto them, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,' not 'if ye cast out devils,' but 'if ye have love one to another.' And

again, 'Hereby shall all men know that Thou hast sent me;' not 'if these men raise the dead,' but, 'if they be one.'

For, as to miracles, they oftentimes, while they profited another, have injured him who had the power, by lifting him up to pride and vainglory, or haply in some other way: but in our works there is no place for any such suspicion, but they profit both such as follow them, and many others. These then let us perform with much diligence. For if thou change from inhumanity to almsgiving, thou hast stretched forth the hand that was withered. If thou withdraw from theatres and go to the church, thou hast cured the lame foot. If thou draw back thine eyes from an harlot, and from beauty not thine own, thou hast opened them when they were blind. If instead of satanical songs, thou hast learnt spiritual psalms, being dumb, thou hast spoken.

These are the greatest miracles, these the wonderful signs. If we go on working these signs, we shall both ourselves be a great and admirable sort of persons through these, and shall win over all the wicked unto virtue, and shall enjoy the life to come; unto which may we all attain, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and might forever and ever. Amen (*Homily 32*, 11, on Matthew 9:27-30).

And Himself too, when He was making laws for His own disciples, what said He? 'Do miracles, that men may see you'? By no means. But what? 'Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.' And to Peter again He said not, 'If thou lovest me, do miracles,' but 'feed my sheep.' And whereas He everywhere distinguishes him with James and John above all the rest, for what, I pray thee, did He distinguish them? For their miracles? Nay, all alike cleansed the lepers, and raised the dead; and to all alike He gave that authority.

Whence then had these the advantage? From the virtue in their soul. Seest thou how everywhere practice is required, and the proof by works? 'For by their fruits,' saith He, 'ye shall know them.' And what commends our own life? Is it indeed a display of miracles, or the perfection of an excellent conversation? Very evidently it is the second; but as to the miracles, they both have their origin from hence, and terminate herein. For both He that shows forth an excellent life, draws to Himself this gift, and he that receives the gift, receives it for this end, that he may amend other men's lives. Since even Christ for this end wrought those miracles, that having made Himself thereby credible, and drawn men unto Him, He might bring virtue into our life. Wherefore also He lays more stress of the two on this. For He is not at all satisfied with the signs only, but He also threatens hell, and promises a kingdom, and lays down those startling laws, and all things He orders to this end, that He may make us equal to the angels.

And why say I, that Christ doth all for this object? Why, even thou, should one give thee thy choice, to raise dead men by His name, or to die for His name; which I pray thee, of the two wouldest thou rather accept? Is it not quite plain, the latter? and yet the one is a miracle, the other but a work. And what, if one offered thee to make grass gold, or to be able to despise all wealth as grass, wouldest thou not rather accept this latter? and very reasonably. For mankind would be attracted by this more than any way. For if they saw the grass changed into gold, they would covet themselves also to acquire that power, as Simon did, and the love of money would be increased in them; but if they saw us all contemning and neglecting gold, as though it were grass, they would long ago have been delivered from this disease... Wherefore, if thou desire to become equal to the apostles, there is nothing to hinder thee. For to have arrived at this virtue only suffices for thy not at all falling short of them.

Let no one therefore wait for miracles. For though the evil spirit is grieved, when he is driven out of a body, yet much more so, when he sees a soul delivered from sin. For indeed this is his

great power. This power caused Christ to die, that He might put an end to it (*Homily XLVI:3, 4 on Matthew 13:24-30*).

## 21. John of Damascus (c.675-c.749)

*John of Damascus was the last of the great Eastern fathers. His writings are still drawn upon in the Greek Church today and he was also described as a 'Doctor of the Church' by Pope Leo XIII in 1890. In this passage he claims that it is only because of unworthiness that the people of his day did not exercise spiritual gifts (even the gift of teaching), but that the remains of the martyrs (who were worthy) were still working miracles.*

So the disciples of the Lord and His Apostles, made wise by the Holy Spirit and working wonders in His power and grace, took them captive in the net of miracles and drew them up out of the depths of ignorance to the light of the knowledge of God. In like manner also their successors in grace and worth, both pastors and teachers, having received the enlightening grace of the Spirit, were wont, alike by the power of miracles and the word of grace, to enlighten those walking in darkness and to bring back the wanderers into the way. But as for us who are not recipients either of the gift of miracles or the gift of teaching (for indeed we have rendered ourselves unworthy of these by our passion for pleasure), come, let us in connection with this theme discuss a few of those things which have been delivered to us on this subject by the expounders of grace, calling on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Master Christ made the remains of the saints to be fountains of salvation to us, pouring forth manifold blessings and abounding in oil of sweet fragrance: and let no one disbelieve this. For if water burst in the desert from the steep and solid rock at God's will and from the jaw-bone of an ass to quench Samson's thirst, is it incredible that fragrant oil should burst forth from the martyrs' remains? By no means, at least to those who know the power of God and the honour which He accords His saints.

In the law every one who toucheth a dead body was considered impure, but these are not dead. For from the time when He that is Himself life and the Author of life was reckoned among the dead, we do not call those dead who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection and in faith on Him. For how could a dead body work miracles? How, therefore, are demons driven off by them, diseases dispelled, sick persons made well, the blind restored to sight, lepers purified, temptations and troubles overcome, and how does every good gift from the Father of lights come down through them to those who pray with sure faith? (*Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, I, 3; IV, 15*).

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