

ADK 3354

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GOD'S FORGOTTEN GIFTS

By Katherine Byles

Byles, Katherine
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Confirmation in the Early Church

THE PAULIST PRESS

401 West 59th Street - - New York 19, N. Y.

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GOD'S FORGOTTEN GIFTS

By KATHERINE BYLES

THE young officer fresh from West Point or Annapolis has about him a certain distinction of manner. He seems to be signed with the sign and sealed with the seal of his school. Upon him is set a mark, a character, hard to erase. He has poise, and an air of prestige and power which indicates his right to command. His bearing betrays his rank.

Sometimes, too, it is said of a high-bred lady that she is "to the manner born." She is stamped with dignity.

Does it ever occur to us Catholics that we also possess a rank, a distinction, which should declare itself in our bearing? If we are Confirmed Catholics we are graduates of the school of the Holy Ghost. Can we say that we are stamped with the seal of

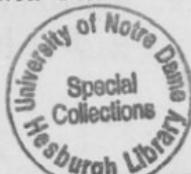
Nihil Obstat:

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.,
Censor Librorum.

Imprimatur:

✠ PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES,
Archbishop of New York.

New York, May 4, 1927.



our school? Have we the poise and bearing of a soldier of Christ?

An embarrassed negative must be the answer of most of us. No one would ever take us to be the followers of a Divine Leader. We are an army of stragglers, dragging along the road to the front. And if we ask ourselves why we do not hold up our heads and step along briskly and courageously to battle, we shall easily understand that power and purpose are lacking to us because we make no use whatever of the graces and gifts bestowed upon us by the Holy Ghost in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Fools that we are—having grace, we profit not.

Stupidity

To have a fortune invested is prudence; but to make no use of that fortune is folly. Does a sane man struggle and famish for want of money, when all the time he has at his command thousands of dollars? In the life of the body most of us exhibit a fair amount of common-sense. When hungry, we open the ice-box; when cold, we turn on the steam; when dull, we tune in on the radio.

But in the life of the spirit we are stupid

and give small evidence of possessing common-sense. Endowed with superb gifts of mind and character, we even forget that we were ever given such powers. How many Christians grub along, feeble, fearful, timid, flabby, and dull? And within them, waiting only to be used, lie the powers received in Confirmation.

The Lord Jesus knew that His Church would spread until the end of time; He knew also that, as He had promised, the Holy Ghost would come to enlighten and to strengthen the Apostles. They, and after them, all Christians, having received this sacrament, would face the world as soldiers of the King.

The First Confirmation

Before we begin to define this wonderful power-giving sacrament, it may be well for us to recall the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles.

Our Lord and the Twelve had gone around together for three years. These companions of His were rough men, workmen. One wonders what their table manners were, and whether they used grammatical language. We know that they were sometimes dull. Over and over they ask

ridiculous questions. Could such people preach a new religion to all the world? Of course they could not.

And they were traitors. They deserted the Wonderful One in His trial and death. They hid in an upper room. Hid like frightened cowards. Did such men believe and appreciate Christianity?

Suddenly they received the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Holy Ghost came upon them. He dowered them with graces and gifts, and forthwith they went downstairs, out of that room, and what sort of men were they? Their minds perceived clearly the truths of God; their tongues were gifted with the art of brilliant and lucid exposition; and their hearts were filled, over-filled, with joy and courage to go out and preach to all mankind, everywhere.

The task was possible, simply because they were filled with the Holy Ghost. And we too have been filled with the Holy Ghost. But we have not, alas! gone out onto street corners to preach; we have not even kept the gifts of our Confirmation in our memories.

History

Perhaps we are so negligent because we forget that Confirmation—the coming of

the Holy Ghost—was the great consolation our Lord promised to the grief-stricken disciples when, at the Last Supper, He told them He was about to leave them. We ought to recall His words: "It is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go I will send Him to you."¹

The Confirmation of each one of us is a historic fulfillment of that divine arrangement.

The detailed history of the Sacrament of Confirmation is a cross-section of the Church through the ages. The Apostles conferred the sacrament on converts after Baptism. In the "Acts of the Apostles" we read that Peter and John "laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost."² "And when Paul had imposed his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."³ In the writings of the early Fathers, and later the Schoolmen, we are given detailed accounts of the doctrine and ritual of Confirmation.

Making Fast

Just what is this wonder-working sacrament?

¹ John xvi. 7.

² Acts viii. 7.

³ Acts xix. 6.

St. Thomas says: "Confirmation is to Baptism what growth is to generation." In Baptism we are born spiritually, admitted to citizenship in the unseen Kingdom of God, and acknowledged to be His heirs and sons. But we are as babies and little children, playing artlessly in the garden of our Father.

Time passes; we children grow up; danger is before us; faith will be attacked. So the Church, looking ahead, says: "Come and be made strong and fast and sure in your inheritance as a child who is made in the likeness of his Father." And, obediently, we go to church and kneel before the Bishop, to whom belongs the right to confirm.

The Ceremony

The Bishop does three things. Majestic in the robes of his high office, he raises his hands up and out over the waiting children and prays: "Send forth upon them Thy sevenfold spirit." At that moment could we but see what an amazing thing happens! The souls of those children are filled with the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord. *The imposition of hands* is symbolical of the descent of the Holy Ghost.

Then the candidates approach the Bishop, and he anoints them on the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross, saying: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Is any meaning conveyed to us by anointing with chrism? Chrism is a mixture of oil and balm.

"To anoint with oil." Recollections are awakened in our minds. Do we not see pictures of Greek runners and athletes "anointed with oil" to make their limbs supple for the coming encounter? And balm. What is balm? Balm is used to preserve dead bodies from corruption.

Note the Church's method of teaching by illustration and example. Anointing with chrism, then, illustrates for us that in this sacrament we are given grace to contend as athletes with the enemies of our souls, and grace to keep intact and without decay the life of the spirit.

The blow on the cheek follows. The Bishop strikes the new-made soldier gently on the cheek, and says: "Peace be with thee." Here we have a unique exemplification of that truth, ever ancient and ever new, that persecution and suffering, borne

with a right brave heart, bring the ineffable gift of peace. The Bishop does not stroke the cheek or pat the head, as he pronounces "Peace be with thee." On the contrary, he actually gives a slap. The lesson which the Church so deftly fixes in our minds in a brief second of time is one which solemn-minded, but unguided philosophers trail through laborious volumes about the reactions of the human species to pain.

Unseen Events

Throughout this sacrament, then, we observe a stately, impressive and meaningful ceremony, in which a Bishop, in all his magnificence, deals in a symbolical and significant manner with the youth of his flock. We see little ones, eyes wide open in interest and awe, approach the throne. The unspoiled loveliness of children's faces seems always to draw from the prelate a smile of tenderness and affection. The loving-kindness of the Good Shepherd shines forth in the face of His representative.

But all that the Bishop does, all his acts and words are "outward sign" of something hidden. We know the definition of a sacrament: "A sacrament is an outward sign of an inward grace."

In all sacraments the bishop or priest or person ministering says certain words which we hear with our ears, or performs certain acts which we see with our eyes. But appealingly beautiful or striking as may be the outward ceremony of any sacrament, its beauty fades to nothing, and is overlooked and forgotten when compared with the wonder and the mystery of things unseen which happen before us.

Just what is taking place—which is neither seen nor heard nor felt by any sense? Just this! Inward grace comes to the soul of man.

The saints have tried to tell us what the coming of grace means. But to most of us, it is forever true, as St. Paul says, that here we “see through a glass darkly.” Scholars, who have happened to be also saints, after long peering through the dim glass, have understood sufficient to frame a definition in words, and in that we take refuge: “Grace is an inner supernatural power bestowed on the soul by God.”⁴

God and Man

In trying to understand this matter of the outward sign and the inward grace of

⁴ *Grace*, by Hansjakob, p. 33. B. Herder, 1913.

the sacraments, we had better go back and recall to mind a few fundamental facts of religion.

On the one hand is God, a Spirit of absolute goodness and perfection, a Being of immeasurable power and beauty and loveliness. On the other hand is little puny man—foolish, ineffectual man. But, wonder of all wonders, this surpassingly great God loves the insignificant creature of His making, with a love that is not to be comprehended in human terms. Having brought man out of nothingness, and bestowed upon him the gift of life on this earth, God could have left him to work out his destiny unhelped.

But His love for us is so encompassing, so insistent from minute to minute, that, almost like any human lover, He cannot leave us alone at all. He must be helping and caring and anticipating our needs. And, among the infinite evidences of His loving-kindness, He has arranged, as it were, stopping places of refreshment and aid all along the way of our journey.

The new-born baby arrives at the first stopping-place, which is Baptism. God parts the veil that hangs between time and eternity, and casts from Himself a ray of

grace, straight to the soul of the baby. At that moment, at the very dawn of life, the child is joined to God by grace. If our dull eyes were only keen enough to see through the "dark glass," we should behold the radiance of heaven, of God, right there, before us, streaming out over the wee new heir to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The baby lives and grows and sins. The beauty of his soul is tarnished. Poor little one, he is sad and troubled. Again God's Providence has arranged a stopping-place, to which the child runs for relief. The outward sign is the Sacrament of Penance. At the words of absolution, the veil is parted and inward grace flows from God to the child.

When explorers ventured up to scale Mount Everest, at intervals they found food supplies, left ahead of time, stored for their use, at definite vantage points. And the adventurous but exhausted travelers did not blindly pass by these spots; they aimed for them; they went straight to them.

So God has arranged for storage supplies of grace all along life's journey. Our next stopping-place after Penance, in our climb up the Mount of Eternity, is Confirmation.

Effects of Confirmation

When we receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, three unseen events come to pass. (1) Sanctifying grace is increased in the soul. (2) An indelible character is imprinted upon the soul. (3) And a special sacramental grace, consisting in the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, is conferred upon the soul.

Sanctifying Grace

The increase of sanctifying grace in the soul obviously implies that the recipient of the sacrament is already in a state of grace. Confirmation is a sacrament of the living. Those receiving it are already in the friendship of God, but they receive a fresh access of friendship and love; the life of God in their souls is increased.

The meaning of the expression, "the life of God in the soul," which is sanctifying grace, becomes clearer if we think first in terms of human friendship. It sometimes befalls that a person is "out of friendship" with the being he loves best of all on earth. Then, indeed, darkness covers his spirit, the joy of life goes out of him, and a sense of darkness sweeps upon him. Depression possesses him and his soul is consumed with misery.

This condition is a picture of the soul whose friendship with God is destroyed by serious sin. God no longer dwells within him.

Now if this state portrays the departure of God, the absence of sanctifying grace, the reverse of this picture suggests to us what the presence of sanctifying grace means. Radiance, love, fill the soul; God dwells there. The friendship of God, the life of God, glows in the depth of the spirit.

So, with the reception of this sacrament, the life of God in the soul is increased. The friendship between the divine and the human lover becomes greater, deeper, warmer. Such is sanctifying grace, which can be only thus briefly mentioned here.

"Character"

The Holy Ghost comes also to imprint on the soul a sign, a mark of rank, a "character" never to be obliterated.

This mark or sign can best be understood by recalling the meaning of "character." The word is derived from a Greek verb which means "to make sharp," to "cut into furrows," to "engrave."

Quite literally and seriously a character is cut into the soul. Forever after, that soul

is different. It is marked, sealed with the sign of the King. The Lord of Hosts has, as it were, slipped His Hand through the veil which separates me from Him and has pressed upon my soul a sign, as a signet ring forever stamps the wax with the symbol of its owner.

That impact of the Hand of God upon the soul, that pressure of His seal, remains. The child is a soldier of God forever, to face the foes of his Divine General.

Suppose that, after Confirmation, children were taught to look daily into their souls, there to see imprinted the word "Mine." Would they not learn early the grandeur and responsibility of their career? Would they not send back to God many a warm word of love—"Oh, yes, dear Lord, I am Thine."

Soldiers of Christ, marked and set apart, we are.

The young man, graduated from West Point, receives his insignia of rank. He wears a certain uniform, has certain braid markings on his sleeve, a shoulder badge and side-arms—all marks of his military rank. But too often he retires at once from the profession on which he and the government have expended so much time and money. The reason for this strange action

we know only too well. Though appointed an officer of the army, he has not the means to live up to his rank.

The soldier of God is in no such plight; he is provided with ample "means." The Sacrament of Confirmation not only signs with the seal, but gives grace to live up to the dignity of the rank.

Sacramental Grace

The special sacramental grace of Confirmation consists of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Let us first recall that "Grace is an inner supernatural power bestowed on the soul by God." And then let us pay particular attention to the word "power." Power means "energy," and no modern requires instruction in the subject of energy. We even reduce the whole universe to terms of electric energy.

And, in the words of Father Heinrich Hansjakob, "likewise we must recognize that the sacraments are, in a certain sense, mediums for the transmission of energy."

But, what use do we make of the "energy" transmitted to us in Confirmation?

Suppose that for a Christmas present a

child is given a flashlight and a rubber ball. The flashlight is capable of illuminating dark corners and the ball is capable of bouncing. But the boy leaves the gifts in a corner and forgets them. There they lie for a year, when he comes across them again. Are they usable? He tries the flashlight. The battery has run out, standing idle. The rubber ball is dry and has lost its power of resiliency.

So, in the soul, our gifts lose energy through disuse.

As Cardinal Manning says: "Those who have lost these spiritual gifts" (through mortal sin) "or by indolence have neglected to use them, are like ships that are dismantled, which lie motionless upon the waters. The winds blow upon them in vain. There is no sail spread to catch them."⁵

Professor Thorndike of Columbia University, imparting to his students the secret of successful teaching, used to say:

Do you want to learn to play the piano?
Play it.

Do you want to make a touchdown?
Make it.

Do you want to be a straight shot?
Shoot straight.

⁵ This and following quotations from Cardinal Manning are from *The Internal Mission of the Holy Ghost*, from which all doctrinal matter concerning the Gifts is taken.

Do you want to be a writer? Then write.

In a rough and ready way this dictum is true. And if we take the short cut to accomplishment, we often discover in ourselves undreamed-of powers.

The Justine Ward method of teaching music to thousands of children astonished the educational world by its results. How few adults, ten years ago, could read music at sight and actually understand the science of composing music! Today, thousands, literally thousands of little children go through feats of composition and of sight-reading which leave us gasping.

Just consider the wealth of creative joy missed by generations of human beings who do not even know sharp from flat, and would be amused if told that they could be musical if they would but use their powers of ear and eye.

As the recent strides in musical education set us to wondering what other latent powers await the magic spell of "use," so, in the life of the soul, we may make startling discoveries if we only begin to put our powers into action.

Fortitude

The power of fortitude is easy to start with. A list of those who fail to use their

Confirmation gift of Fortitude would be long. It would include all whose life is passed to the refrain: "I didn't mean it." "I just couldn't help it." "I was too tired to go on." "The temptation was too strong for me." "Life's too hard."

Do you recognize the language? Weak, shilly-shallying human beings! Are Christians supine denatured creatures of this sort? Not if they recall their supernatural gifts.

How can we be men and women of fortitude, valiant and courageous?

The answer is simple. Using the gift of the Holy Ghost, LET US BE valiant and courageous. Each time temptation comes, put on a bold front, say, "Holy Spirit, help me to use the gift You have given me." Then look temptation straight in the eye and win out. Has He not said: "My grace is sufficient for thee"? ⁶

If you start to train yourself to Fortitude by the regular practice of some small act of mortification, stick to your resolution at all costs. When you want "to be like other people," to see the latest doubtful play, or to read the last word in modern sophistication, breathe a word to the Spirit of

Valor, use your gift, and just smile when your companions say "Goody-Goody!"

And, when in the depths of consciousness, boys or girls hear the suggestion to go and devote life and talent to the service of God, then have they a glorious chance to bring into play the gift of Fortitude, and to answer the call of the Lord valorously.

Or, to take an extreme case, suppose that love and the fair promise of happiness lead away from faith and religion. Then in dire need, make vehement use of your gift, and lay down happiness, even life.

Fear of the Lord

The gift known as Fear of the Lord is somewhat paradoxically named. For does not "perfect love cast out fear"? Yes, truly. But the greater the love, the greater the fear of losing that love. In the case of a human lover, think how he fears to injure or offend his beloved, not at all because he is afraid of her, but because he has fear of losing the unpurchasable prize of her love.

And so, with God, we fear not Him, but we fear greatly to lose the ineffable treasure of His love. It is easy to see that if a person were imbued with this fear, he would

never sin. He would spend his days thinking of His Beloved Lord and of the way to please Him. Going to and from business, a man would pass little time on crossword puzzles. He would seize that precious idle hour to think about the Divine Object of his love. He would be terribly concerned and anxious to discover whether he had sinned in any way against that love.

Piety

Quite obviously the constant practice of this Fear of the Lord leads to Piety, which is the expression of love in adoration, praise, and thanksgiving.

These two gifts of Fear and Piety react on one another. The more we adore, praise, and thank God, the more we love Him and the more we fear to lose His love.

If we realize that conscious intense love of God leads to sanctity, we shall see that we who are Confirmed are expected to be saints. In Confirmation we received the gifts of Piety and Fear of the Lord. If we but be pious, if we but fear to lose God's love, if we but exercise these powers of ours, we take our stand among the holy ones of God.

The possibilities within us are tremen-

dous, if we call on the Holy Ghost for co-operation. We are, of course, called to be saints, because we are children of God and heirs of Heaven.

The Intellect

These three gifts, Fortitude, Fear of the Lord, and Piety, are powers which, in an especial way, affect the will. They supply us with energy to be brave, to fear to lose the Lord, and to love Him devotedly. The other four gifts, Knowledge, Counsel, Understanding, and Wisdom, produce their results particularly in the intellect.

The intellect we know to be tied up inextricably with the will. If I will that my muscles take me to a certain place, I must first have thought of going to that place. Then mental process of "thinking about" anything means the using of the intellect.

Intellect and will cannot be separated in practice. An old professor of Psychology tried to teach his pupils how to be on time for an early morning class. "The alarm clock or the bell wakes you. You lie warm under the eiderdown. You think how snug and cozy you are. You hug the pillow for a last comfortable minute. You are asleep

again, and awake a half-hour later—the day spoiled.”

“Another day, at the bell, you think of jumping out of bed, you see your feet on the rug, in thought you reach to close the window, you picture yourself briskly entering your class on time. Before you know it, your will has followed your intellect, your muscles have acted, and you are up and out.”

This illustration of the teacher is employed to show that the intellect, as a rule, guides the will, and that action is commonly the result of the will as affected by the intellect. If the intellect be warped or faulty, will and therefore action will be wrongly influenced. If the will is to follow what the intellect shows to be desirable, then we must be sure that the intellect is worthy of being followed. It must be primed to truth.

A savage, though unbaptized, being a man, has, by nature, an intellect. Looking about him, he puts two and two together, and by his natural reason, discovers the existence of the Supreme Being. He is later baptized, and receives, over and above his human reason, the supernatural light of faith. By faith he perceives mysteries beyond human reason.

Gift of Knowledge

But in Confirmation, he receives a further light, in addition to the light of faith: he receives the gift of Knowledge.

Of this gift, Cardinal Manning says: ". . . it is not only the light by which we know the truth, but it is also the love of truth. . . . And with that love comes a facility to discern and to act upon truth."

This gift has a most fortunate effect upon the intellect. "It gives a predisposition to see and love the truth." It furnishes the Christian with a touchstone for testing the truth of what he hears, for judging whether any theory, any proposal, any act is according to the Will of God.

The practical result of this gift is easily seen in actual cases. There was a young Catholic girl, who through circumstances beyond the control of her parents, attended a rationalistic, anti-religious college. In later years she used to say: The risk was great. I was unhappy and compelled always to be alert and on guard. But I used to pray to the Holy Ghost, and I believe that He made my gift of Knowledge very active. For all the false philosophy that I heard, all the false science that was presented to my mind, had to pass a certain

test. I seemed to possess a touchstone of truth, so that I was never tricked into compliance with any of the mad theories rampant around me. My mental process was direct and simple. In a flash, my touchstone, which I take to be my gift of Knowledge, sorted out everything into "true" and "false."

This girl was, as she thought, using her gift—discovering God's laws in the universe, not man's whims and fancies.

The gift of Knowledge shows us "not only what we ought to believe, but what things we ought to do." The light of this gift endows us with a powerful perception of what is right.

Non-religious educators try vainly to curb immorality by showing the disgusting results of evil doing. The slogan of such teachers is negative: "Don't sin; you'll pay the penalty." Any amateur in pedagogy knows the weakness of the negative command. But a "don't" lies at the base of all sex-education in the public schools.

The Catholic system is positive. We say to our adolescents: "Look upon truth, upon beauty, upon purity. Behold the Maid of maids. Copy her. With the power you possess in your gift of Knowledge, choose lovely things and good things."

One who persistently sees only what is good, and consciously views life in the light of one's gift, acquires a kind of super-natural immunity. Evil seems to go over one's head; it is not seen. The mind is so full of truth and goodness that it skips evil.

Once we get this extraordinary gift of Knowledge into daily use, we save ourselves years of labor in the struggle toward perfection. Perceiving truth and goodness so readily, with the aid of our gift, we run in the path of virtue. We jump over toilsome years of struggle with temptation, for the eye of the mind sees clear and straight, and we leap over error and temptation to the high places of God.

Counsel

In the pursuit of that unique state we call "perfection" the gift of Knowledge is seconded by the gift of Counsel.

Counsel is a kind of super-knowledge. If by Knowledge we distinguish between true and false and right and wrong, by Counsel we "know which, between two things, both good and right, is better, higher, and more pleasing in the sight of God."

Counsel, besides endowing the soul with this delicate perception, gives a certain promptness of will in carrying out in actual practice what we perceive to be right and best and most perfect.

A weighty responsibility falls upon everyone who possesses this gift. If to each Confirmed Catholic is given this power to become perfect, how can it be that the great mass of Catholics think themselves good enough if they just avoid mortal sin? People have a wholly false idea that "perfection" is something meant for "religious" and for a few "holy" people.

"Perfection" means being 100 per cent in all good things: 100 per cent in faith and hope and love, and therefore 100 per cent in all the splendid and charming qualities that develop from these three cardinal virtues. To become "perfect" should be a thrilling adventure to the American people who admire so unstintedly the 100 per cent swimmer or automobile maker or champion of the people.

Once having become ambitious to be perfect and to be rated 100 per cent, all we need do is to make constant use of our gift of Counsel; then we shall find fresh valleys of adventure opening out before the gaze of the spirit. "Seek and ye

shall find"—find joy, and the peace not of this world.

Understanding

It seems incredible that, with all these wondrous endowments, there can be left yet anything more to be given to man. But God has riches without end for those who reach out to accept them. And Understanding is a God-like gift indeed.

To begin with natural human understanding, is it not true that the more we study and think and reason the greater depth of understanding we discover in ourselves? "It is developed more and more as its powers are called out."

So with spiritual understanding, the depths of its power have not been fathomed. Those who correspond with the Spirit receive a power of discernment which, "like a subtle intuition of the eye, penetrates with great precision below the surface and discerns that which lies beneath it."

Take the word of our Lord's: "My peace I leave you." Meditate upon it. Now we who have not used and developed and cultivated our gifts, can do barely more than read the plain surface meaning of the words. But the man trained in the school of the Holy Spirit sees beyond the letters,

through the words, and glimpses what was in the mind of the Lord when He spoke.

Those rare individuals who have cultivated this gift to a high degree are almost impelled to become, in some way, teachers of religion. Having run far ahead of others in the understanding of God's word, they generously retrace their steps, and patiently try to teach their dull and laggard brethren what they have learned. Those who possess much Understanding are consumed with a desire to speak out, to preach, to write, to catechize, to share with the world the glorious secrets that lie revealed to them.

Wisdom

The constant active use of all these six gifts leads us nearer and nearer and nearer to God. When we have drawn quite close to Him, we discover that we have acquired Wisdom, which is, in a way, the perfection of all the other gifts. Is not Wisdom a title of God Himself? If we are exercising all the power latent in us through the other gifts, we find Wisdom in operation in our souls. Wisdom does something very wonderful to us. It "unites the soul with God, because it produces in the soul the habit of recollection, a constant sense of the presence of God."

Picture yourself for a moment walking in a soft green meadow, with the spring sunshine all about you. The gladness of the earth and sky and sun penetrate your body and soul. You walk with a light heart and a joyous step. You are filled with the sunshine.

But suppose that for the light and warmth of the material sun, we substitute the light and warmth of God. "Walk before Me and be perfect," God once said to Abraham. So we can walk with God in us and around us, imbued with a realization of His ineffable Presence.

He is, as a matter of scientific fact, all about, for He is the Personal living Principle which keeps all life in the universe in existence. Why not give practical recognition to this fact of His Presence? WALK BEFORE HIM. Follow the pressure of His Hand guiding you this way and that way, and learn with Francis Thompson that all life is "as the shade of His Hand outstretched caressingly."

Fruits of the Spirit

The seven gifts are helps infused into souls by the bountiful Holy Spirit. And if we use them faithfully what will be the result?

Is not a fruit a result? As the fruit is the evidence of living sap and vitality in the tree, so the Fruits of the Holy Spirit are an outward proof of inward grace. Is it not encouraging to know that if we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, we shall give forth such fruits as these?

Charity
Joy
Peace

Patience
Benignity
Goodness
Longanimity
Faith
Mildness

Modesty
Continency
Chastity

These twelve Fruits are listed in this way to indicate their relationships. The first three have to do with our relation to God. Charity is love; joy the ecstasy that comes from loving God; and peace the result of loving Him.

The second group of Fruits have to do with our intercourse with other people—our neighbor. To be smilingly patient; to look with kindness on everybody; to diffuse goodness all around; to persevere with people; to show good faith, that is, to be a person of honor; to be gentle, which is to be without bad temper or ill-will—these delectable traits make the children of the Holy Spirit so lovely and so fascinating to all their friends and relatives.

The third group of Fruits concern ourselves.

Modesty we must remember means literally "moderateness, unassuming conduct." Regard for others, unobtrusiveness, all the lost qualities of the present generation, seem to be phases of Modesty. Contenance is especially the repression of passion—"holding one's self in," as we say. And last comes Chastity, that ravishing quality which means more than anything a custody or watch over the senses—and which produces in its possessor a certain look which reminds one of starlight, gleaming silver, sparkling diamonds. The inner purity of the chaste soul glows through the shell of the body, and is evident to all beholders.

The Beatitudes

Piling gift on gift, bounty on bounty, overwhelming us with riches, the Holy Spirit goes yet one step further and higher. Our Lord Himself explicitly told us about the Beatitudes which are the ultimate results of the use of the gifts of the Sacrament of Confirmation.⁷

From the Beatitudes we learn that suffering is necessary for Perfection. The

⁷ St. Matt. v. 2-12.

highest point which we may reach on this earth is to live all the time as our Lord lived. And that means—to suffer.

If we love Him, we long to do all He did, and to follow Him everywhere. To do what He did, to go where He went, is to suffer.

And, after a while, to suffer with our Lord Jesus, is to acquire a strange happiness and peace. At some indefinable point, suffering passes over into joy and peace.

Then is the work of the Spirit on earth complete. We are “blessed” as the Beatitudes proclaim. We have that peace which “passeth understanding,” that peace which the world cannot give.

“My peace I leave you,” was our Lord’s will and testament to us. And the way to discover this testament is by the devoted following of the impulses of the Spirit of God.

