

In the Book of Acts we read of the incredible miracles, healings and supernatural works of the Holy Spirit the Disciples of Jesus performed to validate their message to the Jews and also the pagan world.

However, even though we know from Scripture that what the Apostles taught and did was to be the true pattern for all later teaching and practice, and the standard by which they would be judged, many Christians of the last century could only speculate about the nature of later signs and wonders. This is because they mistakenly believed there were no early Church records that made mention of them.

But contrary to this belief, there is actually compelling evidence from some early Church writers from the time of Christ up to the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D that shows the manifestations of the Holy Spirit continued to be just as supernatural and vibrant as they had been in the time of the Apostles!

The records of these writers were collected in a set of ten volumes known as the *Ante-Nicene Library*, published for the first time in 1890. Below we provide just a few samples for the reader's edification.

In a work entitled *Letter to the Corinthians*, Clement, the Bishop of Rome, A.D. 100, makes reference to the continuation of supernatural works of the Holy Spirit. We read, “An abundant outpouring also of the Holy Spirit fell upon all.”

There are also some references to the prophetic gifts still operating in an early Church manual known as the *Didache*, from A.D. 110. In another work, *the Shepherd of Hermas*, A.D. 110, we find a reference to speaking in tongues and prophecies.

Skipping ahead to A.D. 185, the Christian teacher Irenaeus wrote a treatise refuting heresies, called the *Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So Called*. It contains many references to manifestations of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, including creative miracles and people being raised from the dead in some Churches. Irenaeus also makes reference to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in another work, entitled *Against Heresies*. Here he writes:

In like manner, we do also hear many brethren in the church, who possess prophetic gifts, and through the Holy Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declares the mysteries of God.

Other references to many supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit appearing in the daily lives of the second and third century Church come from Justin Martyr, A.D. 165, Origen A.D. 185, Tertullian, A.D. 215, and Novatian, A.D. 270.

Novatian wrote a paper in defence of the Trinity. In addition to this, he wrote about the role of the Holy Spirit in supernaturally empowering the Christian Church. We read:

This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, often discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of charismata; and thus make the Lord's Church everywhere, and in all, perfected and completed.

One commentator who carefully researched these documents discovered upon further research of the writings of the Medieval Church that supernatural signs and wonders, although small in comparison, continued to manifest in a variety of places and were attested by respected historical authorities. Among such writings were those of the Venerable Bede and the Reformer Martin Luther!