

THE EFFECTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE CHURCH AND IN OUR SOULS.

*The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things.—John 14: 26.*

Christ kept his word. He had frequently promised his Apostles that after his departure to his Father he would send them the Holy Ghost. This promise was fulfilled on this day. Whilst the Apostles and the other believers were assembled in the same place in Jerusalem, suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and the Holy Ghost descended upon them, in the form of fiery tongues, and filled them with his graces. Fortified with this spirit of truth and strength, they began their apostolic mission, preaching the gospel and receiving into the Christian Church all those Jews and Gentiles who believed. With justice therefore we begin a new cycle of feasts with Pentecost, for with it a new era begins; the law of grace is announced, and the nations of the earth subject themselves to it. The cycle of the feasts of Pentecost represents to us the time which began with the mission of the Holy Ghost, the establishment and propagation of the Church of Christ, whose duration extends to the end of the world. We have the happiness to live in this time of grace and to belong to the Church of Christ, in whom the Holy Ghost has taken his permanent abode, in order to apply in her and through her the fruits of Redemption to mankind. Let us consider to-day the twofold missions of the Holy Ghost, which he has ever since continued and will continue to the end of time—

- I. To teach, sanctify and govern the Church;*
- II. To enlighten, console, strengthen and sanctify every individual soul.*

Continued below



## PART I.

The Church is the living Christ upon earth. As Christ, for the Redemption of mankind, was necessarily obliged to unite in himself two natures, the divine and the human, so the Church must have in herself something human as well as divine, in order to impart to men the grace of Redemption. This is really the case. The Church, like her Founder, has her human nature, for she consists of human beings; but, like Christ, she has something divine, and this is the Holy Ghost, whom he promised and sent. The Holy Ghost is not hypostatically or personally united with the Church, as the humanity and divinity are united in Christ; but he will abide with the Church for ever according to the promise of Christ: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever."—*John 14: 16.* It is the Holy Ghost that enables the Church to do all that is required for the salvation of men. I shall mention only three of his effects as regards the Church.

### 1. *The Holy Ghost teaches the Church.*

The Church has been commissioned to teach all nations. "Going therefore teach ye all nations, baptizing them. . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—*Matt. 28: 19, 20.* Now the question is: Could the Church, depending on her own strength alone, preach the doctrine of Christ pure and unadulterated? By no means; for the Church is composed of human beings; the Pope is a man; the bishops are men; so are the priests. But men are not infallible; they may err and lead others into error. If the Church were a purely human institution she would be liable to err, and we should have no security that what she teaches is the pure word of God.

It is evident, then, that the Church, in order to be infallible in her teaching, must not be limited to her human strength, but must contain something divine; and she does, for Christ sent her the Holy Ghost with the assurance that he would abide with her for ever. Now the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth, and is given to the Church principally to teach her all truth, according to what Christ emphatically says in the gospel of this day: *The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.* Hence what the Church teaches is not the word of man; it is the word of God; the Holy Ghost teaches us through the Church and makes use of her mouth to bring to our knowledge all that is necessary for us to believe and do in order to be saved. We must therefore believe the Church, because it is

the Holy Ghost that preaches to us the word of God through her. Let us then faithfully adhere to the doctrine of the Church.

## *2. The Holy Ghost sanctifies the Church.*

The merits of Christ are as a fountain of living water of which the children of the Church cannot avail themselves except by divine help, or grace. This grace is imparted to us by the Holy Ghost, who enkindles in our souls the desire of sanctity, assists us in complying with all the conditions required, and, at last confers on us sanctifying grace. "You are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God."—*I. Cor.* 6: 11. We are sanctified by the holy sacraments, especially by baptism, in which man is born again of water and the Holy Ghost (*John* 3: 5); and by the Sacrament of Penance, in which our sins are forgiven by virtue of the Holy Ghost. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."—*John* 20: 22, 23. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, by which we receive the fulness of the grace of the Holy Ghost, we are strengthened against the attacks of our spiritual enemies. We should therefore be very thankful to God for our vocation to the Holy Catholic Church; among the Protestant sects no sacraments are administered, except baptism.

## *3. The Holy Ghost directs and governs the Church.*

(a.) He confers upon bishops and priests their power. The Pope, bishops and priests have their power not from man but from the Holy Ghost. "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was."—*Heb.* 5: 4. Again: "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God."—*Acts.* 20: 28. And St. Chrysostom says: "If it were not for the Holy Ghost, there would be no shepherds and teachers in the Church."

(b.) As kings govern their kingdoms by their officers, so the Holy Ghost governs the Church by the pastors as his instruments, and defends her against all enemies, so that the gates of hell can never prevail against her. The Holy Catholic Church has existed already more than eighteen hundred years. What changes have taken place upon earth during this long interval of time! How many kingdoms and empires have arisen, become great and powerful, but have either fallen, or been supplanted by others!

Unlike the human institutions of men, the Church of Christ alone has stood the test of time. Macaulay's lazy traveler, wher-

ever he be to-day, may seek his broken arch at leisure, for he will never have an opportunity of sketching her mighty ruins. Armed only with the weapons of the Divine Word, of prayer, of patience and of tears, she stands to-day immovable on the rock of Peter, where Christ placed her, and has overcome prolonged and most atrocious persecutions and all the attacks of her interior and exterior enemies, coming forth victorious from all her contests. She has had, it is true, many and grievous losses to deplore, millions of her children have apostatized, but she has been richly compensated for this defection, and she has always put forth new branches, like a stately tree planted by the running waters. It is evident, then, that a higher power protects the Church, for if she were dependent on human help she would have long ago shared the fate of the works and institutions of men, and vanished from the earth. The Holy Ghost is at the helm of Peter's bark, and directs, governs and defends her against all her visible and invisible, interior and exterior, enemies, steering her safely through the billows and breakers of time, without losing a single spar, into the port of eternity.

## PART II.

All graces are imparted to us by the Holy Ghost. "No man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost."—*I. Cor.* 12: 3. We owe him especially the following graces:

1. The *Holy Ghost enlightens us*, so that we may know what is true, good and salutary. We witness this effect in the Apostles. Although our Saviour had been teaching them for three years, they remained "foolish and slow of heart to believe."—*Luke* 24: 25. When the Holy Ghost came down upon them, he taught them all truth. Illiterate fishermen, who never before spoke in public, announce and defend the religion of Christ crucified, before princes, learned men and nations of every tongue. The Holy Ghost enlightens us too. We cannot believe as God requires of us except by divine grace. He enlightens our understanding, that we may know ourselves, especially when we are about to make our confession.

2. The Holy Ghost consoles us in all the tribulations of life. When Jesus was about to leave the world, he consoled his disciples, saying, "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid."—*John* 14: 27. After the day of Pentecost the Apostles were ever full of joy in all their tribulations. When told that they should preach no longer in the name of Jesus, they said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."—*Acts* 5: 29. And

when scourged, "they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."—*Acts* 5: 41. The same spirit will console us, if we struggle to keep our hearts undefiled by sin and free from inordinate inclinations, loving God with our whole heart.

3. The Holy Ghost strengthens us, according to the promise of Christ: "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you."—*Acts* 1: 8. The Apostles, who so feared the Jews that they concealed themselves; who had forsaken their divine Master at the hour of probation, displayed an unbounded courage after the coming of the Holy Ghost. Peter preached publicly: "Let all the house of Israel know most certainly that God hath made both Lord and Christ this same Jesus whom you have crucified."—*Acts* 2: 36. All the Apostles now commenced their missionary labors, saying with St. Paul: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? (As it is written: For thy sake we are put to death, all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.)"—*Rom.* 8: 35, 36. The Holy Ghost strengthens us in our warfare with our enemies. Without him we cannot conceive a salutary thought. "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me."—*Phil.* 4: 13.

4. The Holy Ghost *sanctifies our souls*. Before his coming the Apostles were subject to many imperfections and frailties. They were not meek of heart (*Luke* 9: 52-56); they were ambitious, every one desirous of the first position in the kingdom of their master. Peter went so far as to deny his Lord. But after the descent of the Holy Ghost they are conspicuous for their humility, meekness and charity: they are at once men of heroic virtue and of extraordinary charity. The Holy Ghost also imparts to us sanctifying grace and with it the three theological virtues, *Faith, Hope* and *Charity*, and all the moral virtues. We receive with sanctifying grace the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, in the measure needed to enable us to serve God and attain our salvation. Nay, more, if the Holy Ghost sanctifies us, he comes to us himself and makes his abode with us. "The charity of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."—*Rom.* 5: 5. "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God?"—*I. Cor.* 6: 19.

#### PERORATION.

These are the effects of the Holy Ghost in the Church and in our soul. The Holy Ghost is the invisible Teacher of the Church;

enlightened by him, she preserves the divine doctrine in the most perfect purity and preaches it to the world, pure and undefiled. The Holy Ghost is also the Guide and Ruler of the Church; he it is who chooses her ministers and assists them in the discharge of their office; he it is who not only defends her against all enemies and preserves her, but causes her to be propagated to the uttermost parts of the world. He it is who enlightens us, that we may know what is right and pleasing to God, and who also gives us strength to do what is right. He it is who consoles us in all the tribulations of life; he it is who sanctifies us. Yes, he will do all these things for us if we avoid sin, for by sin the Holy Ghost is driven out of our hearts. "For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful, and will withdraw himself from thoughts that are without understanding, and he shall not abide when iniquity cometh in."—*Wisd.* 1: 5. Let us then pray to the Holy Ghost to enlighten and strengthen us all the days of our life, that we may live holily and make a happy end. Amen.