

Castus amor et honestus,
 Æstus ardens, sed modestus,

Quos urit ardor incestus
 Tua sanet unctio.

Vox non sono designata,
 Vox subtilis, vox privata,
 Vox beatis inspirata,
 O vox dulcis, o vox grata,
 Sona nostris mentibus!

Lux depellens falsitatem,
 Lux inducens veritatem,
 Vitam atque sanitatem
 Et æternam claritatem
 Nobis confer omnibus.
 Amen.

Love! O burning, yet purest
 Love! may thine unction
 heal the wound of seething
 lust.

O soundless Voice! Voice
 mysterious and still! Voice
 whispered in the faithful ear!
 O Voice most sweet and dear!
 —speak to these our souls!
 O lie-dispelling Light! O
 truth-bearing Light! grant to
 each and all of us thy servants
 life, and health, and bright-
 ness everlasting! Amen.

THE GIFT OF WISDOM.

The second favour destined by the Holy Ghost for the soul that is faithful to him in action, is the gift of *Wisdom*, which is superior to that of *Understanding*. The two are, however, connected together, inasmuch as the object shown by the gift of *Understanding*, is held and relished by the gift of *Wisdom*. When the Psalmist invites us to draw nigh to God, he bids us relish our sovereign good: *Taste*, says he, *and see that the Lord is sweet*?¹ Holy Church prays for us, on the day of Pentecost, that we may “relish what is right and just,”—*recta sapere*,—because the union of the soul with God is rather an experience or tasting, than a sight, for such sight would be incompatible with our present state. The light given by the gift of *Understanding* is not intuitive; it gladdens the soul, and gives her an instinctive tendency to the truth,—but its own final perfection depends upon its union with *Wisdom*, which is, as it were, its end.

¹ Ps. xxxiii. 9.

Understanding, therefore, is light; Wisdom is union. Now, union with the sovereign good is attained by the will, that is, by love, which is in the will. Thus, in the angelic hierarchy, the Cherubim, with their sublime intellect, are below the Seraphim, who are inflamed with love. It is quite true, that the Cherubim have ardent love and the Seraphim profound intelligence; but they differ from each other by their predominating quality; and that choir is the higher of the two which approaches the nearer to the Divinity by its love and relish of the sovereign good.

The seventh gift is called by the beautiful name of *Wisdom*, which is taken from its uniting the soul, by love, to the Eternal Wisdom. This Eternal Wisdom, who mercifully puts himself within our reach even in this vale of tears, is the Divine Word, whom the Apostle calls *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the figure of his substance*.¹ It is he who sent us the Holy Ghost, that he might sanctify us and lead us to himself; so that the sublimest of the workings of this Holy Spirit is his procuring our union with Him, who, being God, became Flesh, and for our sakes, made himself obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross.² By the mysteries wrought in his Humanity, Jesus enabled us to enter within the veil of his Divinity; by faith, enlightened by supernatural Understanding, *we see the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father*; ³ and just as he made himself a partaker of our lowly human nature,—so does he give himself, the *uncreated* Wisdom, to be loved and relished by that *created* Wisdom, which the Holy Ghost forms within us, and is the noblest of his Gifts.

Happy, then, they who possess this precious Wisdom, which makes the soul relish God and the

¹ Heb. i. 3.

² Philipp. ii. 8.

³ St. John, i. 14.

things that are of God ! *The sensual man*, says the Apostle, *perceiveth not the things that are of the spirit of God* ;¹ and in order that he may enjoy this Gift, he must become *spiritual*, and docile to the teachings of the Holy Spirit ; and then there would happen to him, what has happened to thousands of others, namely,—that after being a slave to a carnal life, he would recover his Christian freedom and dignity. The man who is less depraved than the former, but still imbued with the spirit of this world, is also incapable of receiving or even comprehending the gifts of Understanding and Wisdom. He is ever ridiculing those whom he cannot help knowing possess these gifts ; he never leaves them in peace, but is ever carping at their conduct, setting himself in opposition to them, and, at times, seeks to satiate his jealousy by bitter persecution. Jesus assures us, that *the World cannot receive the Spirit of Truth, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him*.² They, therefore, who would possess the supreme good, must first divorce themselves from the spirit of the world, which is the personal enemy of the Spirit of God. If they break asunder the chain that now fetters them, they may hope to be gifted with Wisdom.

The special result of this Gift is great vigour in the soul, and energy in all her powers. Her whole life is, so to speak, seasoned with it ; the effect may be likened to that produced in the body by wholesome diet. There is no disagreement between such a soul and her God ; and hence, her union with him is almost inevitable. *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, says the Apostle, there is liberty*.³ Everything is easy to the soul that is under the influence of the Spirit of Wisdom. Things that are hard to nature, are sweet to such a soul ; and suffering does not appal

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

² St. John, xiv. 17.

³ 2 Cor. iii. 17.

her, as once it did. To say that God is near to her is saying too little ;—she is united with him. And yet, she must keep herself in an attitude of profound humility, for pride may reach her even in that exalted state, and oh ! how terrible would be her fall !

Let us with all the earnestness of our hearts, beseech the Holy Ghost to give us this Wisdom, which will lead us to our Jesus, the Infinite Wisdom. One who was wise under the Old Law aspired to this Gift, when he wrote these words, of which we Christians alone can appreciate the full meaning : *I wished and Understanding was given to me ; and I called upon God and the Spirit of Wisdom came upon me.*¹ So that we are to ask for this gift, and with great fervour. In the New Covenant, we have the Apostle Saint James thus urging us to pray for it : *If any of you want Wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him ; but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.*² O Holy Spirit ! we presume to follow this injunction of the Apostle, and say to thee : O thou who proceedest from Power and Wisdom ! give us Wisdom ! He that is Wisdom has sent thee unto us, that thou mayst unite us to him. Take us from ourselves, and unite us to Him who united himself to our weak nature. O sacred source of Unity ! be thou the link uniting us for ever to Jesus ; then will the Father adopt us as *his heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ !*³

¹ Wisd. vii. 7.

St. James, i. 5.

³ Rom. vii. 17.