

'Twas thou, that by enriching the Apostles of Christ with the incomparable gift,— the gift unheard of in previous ages,—

Didst make this day so glorious. Amen.

Ipse hodie
Apostolos Christi
Donans munere insolito,
Et cunctis inaudito
Sæculis,
Hunc diem
Gloriosum fecisti
Amen.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

It is our intention to explain, during this Week, the workings of the Holy Ghost, both in the Church, and in the faithful Soul. These seven Days are given to us, that we may know and appreciate the great *Gift* sent us by the Father and the Son. Moreover, the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, has seven different ways whereby he manifests his presence in our souls. It behoves us, therefore, to devote this happy Week to the study and love of the Sevenfold Gift, whereby are to be wrought our salvation and sanctification.

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost are seven energies, which he graciously puts into the soul, when he enters there by sanctifying grace. Actual graces put these divinely infused powers into motion, either all at once or separately; and hereby, acts supernatural and meritorious of life everlasting, are produced by the free consent of our will.

The Prophet Isaias, guided by divine inspiration, has told us of these Seven Gifts. He is foretelling the workings of the Holy Ghost upon the Soul of the Son of God made Man, whom he calls the Flower of a virginal Root of Jesse. He says: *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the Spirit of Wisdom, and of Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and of Fortitude, the Spirit of Knowledge, and of Godliness, and he shall be filled with the Spirit of*

*the Fear of the Lord.*¹ These mysterious words do not only express the qualities of the Holy Ghost; they also describe the effects he produces in the soul of man; and it is in this sense that they have been interpreted by the Holy Fathers and Theologians.

The sacred Humanity of the Incarnate Son of God is the supernatural type of our own; and what the Holy Ghost operated in the former, for its sanctification, that same, in proportion, he wills to do in the latter. He infused into the Son of Mary the seven *energies* mentioned by the Prophet; the same seven *Gifts* are prepared for regenerated man. But let us notice the order in which they come. Isaias begins with the Spirit of *Wisdom*, and ends with the Spirit of the *Fear of the Lord*. *Wisdom*, as we shall see further on, is the noblest prerogative of which man is capable; whereas the *Fear of the Lord* is but the *beginning* of Wisdom, as the Royal Psalmist assures us.² The soul of Jesus was created for a personal union with the divine Word, and was therefore treated with exceptional honour; the first and foremost Gift infused into it was that of Wisdom, and the Gift of the Fear of the Lord followed, necessarily indeed, (because a creature is not perfect unless it have this quality,) but still as a sequel and completion. With us, on the contrary, frail and inconstant as we are, the Fear of God is the foundation of our whole spiritual building, and by it we raise ourselves gradually to that Wisdom which brings union with God. It is by means of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost that man attains to perfection; but they are bestowed upon him in the order inverse of that wherein Isaias names them, when speaking of the Son of God. We receive them at the time of our Baptism; and, when we have the misfortune to lose them, (as we do when we lose sanctifying

¹ Is. xi. 2, 3.

² Ps. cx. 10.

grace, that is, when we commit a mortal sin,) they are restored to us by the Sacrament of Penance.

Let us respectfully consider how the whole work of our salvation and sanctification is marked with the mysterious number of Seven. There are seven principal Virtues which render us dear to our Maker; it is by seven Gifts, that the Holy Ghost leads us to our last end; the seven Sacraments apply to us the merits of the Incarnation and Redemption; it is after seven Weeks from the Pasch, that the Holy Spirit is sent upon the earth, there to establish and maintain the kingdom of God. Can we wonder after this, that Satan should have sacrilegiously mimicked the work of God, striving to destroy, by the seven deadly sins, the creatures whom God would save?

THE GIFT OF FEAR.

Pride is the obstacle to man's virtue and well-being. It is pride that leads us to resist God, to make self our last end, in a word, to work our own ruin. Humility alone can save us from this terrible danger. Who will give us humility? The Holy Ghost; and this, by infusing into us the Gift of the Fear of God.

This holy sentiment is based on the following truths, which are taught us by faith: the sovereign majesty of God, in comparison with whom we are mere nothingness; the infinite sanctity of that God, in whose presence we are but unworthiness and sin; the severe and just judgment we are to go through after death; the danger of falling into sin, which may be our misfortune at any time, if we do not correspond to grace, for although grace be never wanting, yet we have it in our power to resist it.

Man, as the Apostle tells us, must *work out his*