

in the daily and visible school of our Lord when he was on earth. To them he had indeed preached much of his 'Kingdom'. But even on the way to the Mount Olivet for the Ascension he is asked, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?' After telling them that it was not for them to know the time and moments which the heavenly Father had reserved to himself, our Lord said: 'But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth'.

When the Holy Ghost did come upon the Apostles, there was no more misunderstanding concerning the kingdom. Enlightened by him, the Apostles understood the truth of the Kingdom, and not only preached it in that sense, but also laid down their lives for it.

We may therefore with confidence ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds and hearts, and to surround us always with the loving protection of his divine mission, so to bring us, 'orphans', safely through the trials of this life, to the home of the Father, through Christ our Lord. Amen.



... AND IN THE HOLY GHOST

DEBORAH PEASE ARMSTRONG

THE 'Forgotten Paraclete', the title of a small and now unobtainable book by a Catholic writer (Mgr Maurice Laudrieux), suggests that the 'normal' spirituality taught in seminaries and faithfully distributed to the Catholic flock since the seventeenth century has tended to ignore both the theology of the Holy Ghost and the necessary corollaries which should develop from it in daily Christian prayer and life.

This has not happened without some historically recognisable reason. Père Congar, O.P., explains the situation when he writes: 'Heresies always represent the erection into a system of undue or partial emphasis on a particular

point of view. . . . In face of these one-sided deformations of truth the Church affirms indeed not only the particular truth which is perverted, but the whole corpus of truth which is above all partial statements. . . . It is quite impossible that *apologists* should not seek to re-establish the partially misunderstood truths, and that *theologians* should not devote themselves to more precise and detailed development of doctrine. . . . Wherever an erroneous emphasis or statement is made, the organism of the Church stiffens into concentrated resistance, with the result that since error is always partial, dogmatic truth runs the risk of appearing partial as well.' (*Divided Christendom*, p. 29; italics mine.) It is the voice of these apologists and theologians heard at one particular time which may be mistaken for the infallible voice of the whole Church giving the whole truth.

The challenge of the sixteenth century was met by a concentration upon doctrines of infallibility and authority with the result that there is now a situation in which, as Père Bouyer says, our greatest danger is that we may as Christians 'quench the spirit', for our modern piety takes so little notice of the Holy Ghost. How, he asks, can we recall to mind this 'forgotten Paraclete'? Père Bouyer goes on to show that the comparative lack of meaning in contemporary teaching about the sacrament of confirmation has arisen from this neglect of the doctrines of the Holy Spirit. (cf. *Le Sens de la Vie Monastique*, p. 120.) It is possible that this neglect has affected both the prayer and the practice of Catholics and also the picture of the Church which Catholic Christians show to the world around them.

The theories of the teaching and practice of the Church held by those outside its visible unity are necessarily partly false; and equally false, most often, is their idea of what the one true Church founded by Christ would be like if it existed, which they have to deny. It may therefore be worth while to indicate some of these false theories of the Church and their relation to the doctrine about the Holy Spirit.

We have seen how churchmen sometimes react to heresy, at any particular time, by stiffening and over-emphasising the opposing orthodoxy. This has been particularly true in theories concerning the Holy Spirit. But if he has thus been

turned, through human limitations, into an apparent source of division, there is all the greater hope that we shall in the end realise in practice what he really is, the comforter, the source of all unity in the Divine Life shared by the sons of God and brothers of Christ.

I say that the Holy Spirit himself has been held to be the 'apparent' source of divisions. But in reality he dwells in every baptised Christian of whatever sect, unless he joins in formal heresy or schism (cf. Père Congar, *op. cit.*). He may guide and console those who are nominally 'heretics' in their private lives, thus in a hidden way leading them to perfection without any outward sign of membership of the Church, as we may see in the *Journal* of the Quaker John Woolman. In so far as they profess *doctrinal errors* he has no part, but it is through his invisible life-bringing power that many are led from error to truth and received into visible communion with the Body of Christ.¹

Père Bouyer is not the only person to notice the weakness of present Catholic teaching about the Holy Spirit. Here is what the Quaker, Edward Grubb, writes about organised Churches, and the Catholic Church in particular: 'The story of Christianity from the second century is the story of its loss of the Spirit as a gift to every Christian—the replacement of its original inspiration by ecclesiastical authority, of free spiritual religion by a rigid organisation that went far to stifle whatever life was left'. And again: 'The Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist came to be regarded as special channels or points of contact between the human and the divine, *through which alone*, when administered with the correct form of words and by a rightly appointed priest, a supernatural life could be conveyed to men'. He regards 'ceremonialism, legalism, ecclesiasticism and Bibliolatry' as four great enemies of 'spiritual religion' (*The Worth of Prayer*, pp. III et sqq.).

This is a very characteristic description of the Church as she is seen from the Society of Friends. The great truth remaining is that the Spirit of Christ dwells in every Christian, the great falsehood being that external unity of Creed

¹ Cf. 'Membership of the Church', by A. H. Armstrong, in *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, Oct.-Dec. 1949.

and practice is necessarily a denial of a living inward and spiritual religion.

This quarrel regarding the presence of the Spirit centres on the question of Holy Scriptures. There are those who teach that the Bible is the *only* source of true doctrine and that all personal experience must be tested by the written word of God. The Quakers, on the other hand, believe that the Holy Spirit, active in every Christian at every moment, teaches him truth and the 'true' meaning of what he reads. According to the first, the Holy Spirit has inspired the written word once and for all, and most groups believe that the Inspiration of Pentecost can never be repeated in any way, but that everything must be found in the Bible. In the second the opposite extreme appears: The Holy Spirit descended on George Fox as he did on the Apostles, and he descends in equal fullness on every soul who believes and is saved.

The Puritan and the Quakers of the seventeenth century shared in a profound experience of the Holy Spirit within them. It must be remembered that they had been deprived of the Mass and the blessed Sacrament one hundred years before, and it seems reasonable to believe that there was a compensating increase in the felt power of the Holy Spirit. This would be in accord with the justice and love of God. In any case they saw the Catholic Church, and all Churches as such, as a dead tyranny to be discarded. They imagined that within the Church the Christian life became a technique; religion was something taught by well-drilled clergy and practised externally by an obedient laity. The sacraments were 'magical' and automatic; prayer was a matter of liturgical rubrics and mechanical repetitions; the greater part of doctrine was invented by the 'carnal reasoning' of theologians and schoolmen, and the whole was enforced by a dictatorship of Popes and bishops, avid for power and riches. The Church was supposed to teach that revelation was finished, that the path to salvation lay only through a slavish (i.e. based on fear) obedience not only to the Old Law of the Ten Commandments, but to a multitude of new ones invented by priest-theologians who were to be compared to the High Priests and Pharisees of old. To crown

all, the Church was supposed to have said that all who did not submit to her authority were damned.

In this picture there is clearly no room for the 'liberty of the Spirit', no room for that loving Saviour who promised 'I will be with you always', and 'I will send you the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and he shall bring all things to your mind'.

It has been admitted above that there is ground for accusations of legalism and the other 'isms', and that traditional teaching about the freedom of the Spirit has become slightly buried; nevertheless an attempt must be made to unearth it in order to answer more clearly and precisely these tragic misapprehensions.

The Holy Ghost as the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity lives both in eternity in the divine life, and in his temporal mission. As the life-bringing Spirit of Christ, he is the one source of the spiritual life and authority of the Church. His mission, which was so vividly signalled at Pentecost, began before and has continued ever since: 'Christ has never ceased to continue his teaching of the Church by the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send on my account, will in his turn make everything plain, and recall to your minds everything I have said to you" (John 14, 25).' (From *The Month*, Nov. 1950.)

Thus it is from the Holy Spirit working through the Popes and bishops in a special way that the Church derives her authority to speak with the voice of Christ. But an essential corollary is that so far as anybody possesses and is illuminated by the Holy Ghost, they belong in virtue of that fact to the one true Church, even though they do not share the complete fullness of her life.

When Cardinal Manning writes, speaking of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, 'Where the body is, there is the Spirit', or 'We know that there is the Spirit because there is the body' (*Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*, p. 65), he does not mean to imply that those who do not visibly belong to the Body have no share in the Spirit, 'who bloweth where he listeth'. Within the Church the Holy Spirit dwells in his fullness, operating in every sacrament.

He therefore operates in every baptised person even if this baptism is only one of desire, and the individual concerned has no further part in the true sacramental life of the visible Church. The Holy Trinity is indivisible—where the Spirit is, the life of God is—leading the soul to himself.

With regard to the Scriptures, the outstanding cause of disagreement between the Catholic Church and many separated Christian bodies would appear to be the opposition which the latter see between their theories of Scripture as the only source of Doctrine and what is known as the infallible *Magisterium* of the Church. Many separated Churches have come to admit the existence within them of a Tradition for interpreting the Scriptures; only a few remain—liberal Protestants or the Quakers, for example—to insist on private interpretation.

All supernatural truth is contained in Sacred Scripture: but at the same time it must be understood that the meaning of a text cannot be confined to a literal interpretation because the Bible is '*parole de Dieu révélé*'. Thus the study of the Bible creates a Tradition which is one with the Bible itself—'the part played by tradition is therefore to sustain, enliven, expound and maintain the interpretation of the Word in a traditional and authoritative sense'.² The authority derives from the promises of Christ, the visible descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the subsequent apostolic succession.

The claims of the Catholic Church are thus both more arrogant and more comprehensive than is generally believed. It is almost impossible to present them briefly without at least a falsehood of omission. We may sum it up by saying that there has been one historical Incarnation of God: that God is a Trinity of Persons united in the Godhead: that God the Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ, and that this same Jesus Christ who is God and Man is still incarnate in his mystical body. This body takes its life from the third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, sent visibly according to the historical promise of the second Person who was himself promised by Jahweh speaking to his chosen people.

² I would recommend a study of the article 'Tradition and Ecumenism' by Charles Moeller in *Irenikon*, 4^e Trimestre, 1952.

Where, then, is this mystical body of Christ? Christ is ascended to the 'right hand of God'—but Christ is God and can 'fill all things'. He is in his Church as head of a living body. The Holy Spirit has been thought of as the heart of this body—the source of life and energy. This mystical and yet incarnate body 'is enfleshed' through the community of sinful men known to history as the Catholic Church; but Christ's mystical body is not limited to the visible members of the Church. It exists wherever the Holy Ghost lives, wherever there is baptism, at least of desire and without formal heresy.

A Catholic theologian (Fr Michalon) writes: '. . . no man is absolutely outside the Body of the Church. Only there are in this Body, so to speak, zones of influence of differing vitality, of more or less intense radiation. No heathen or sinner escapes it. In the householder's field the tares "the children of the devil" are not pulled up; who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be pardoned; that is to say that only the obstinate, wilful conscious rejection of "him whom God had anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, Jesus of Nazareth", places a man by deliberate choice outside Christ' (quoted by A. H. Armstrong, art. cit.).

Much has been written about the working out in practice of the Doctrines of Revelation, authority, tradition, etc., but these brief indications must suffice for our present purpose.

In the community of the Church is fulfilled the promise of Christ: 'Behold I . . . I the incarnate God . . . shall be with you always'. In the liturgy of the Church for the feast of Pentecost are two ancient hymns to the Holy Spirit which express the essence of the truth about him, particularly his intimate relationship to individuals.. They are based entirely on Scripture.

The sequence calls upon him to send down his light, which 'sweetly flows in silent streams': the hymn for Vespers asks him to 'take possession of our souls and make them all his own'. Both describe him as father of the poor, source of all that we have of value, as the sweet and comforting guest of the pilgrim. He fills our hearts with love, melts their hardness with his fire, bends our stubborn wills through

the sweetness of his discipline: he is the 'finger of God's right hand' modelling us to the image of Christ. Besides this, he is a source of physical health and strength: 'and with thy strength which never decays, confirm our mortal frame'. He is the fulfilment of the Psalmist's prayer to God, prayed by the Church every evening: 'protect us under the shadow of thy wing'. He drives away the devil and brings us true peace. How?

The Church does not teach that all these operations come about automatically through external rites and the sacraments. Certainly no sacrament exists without the inward operation of the Holy Spirit, both in the sacrament and in those who receive it. The priest who ministers the sacrament is the visible agent of the Holy Spirit. Those who knew Christ in his human nature saw his transfiguration, saw 'only Jesus'—saw his passion, and Peter believed in him. After the Ascension, it is the Spirit of Christ, the third Person of the Holy Trinity, who leads men to the mystical incarnate Christ, to the God-man visible in the sacramental practice of the Church. The divine and human natures are still united. In the mystical body there are numbers of sinful men—including priests, bishops and popes—but through their hidden and mysterious united sharing in the life of the Holy Spirit they make up, in communion and community, the Church the Body of Christ the Head, the Church the Bride of Christ the Bridegroom.

The hard and exclusive character of the external Church has its counterpart in the wood of the cross on which Christ died. This is the price paid by the Creator in order to approach his creatures. Christ as man died once on a hard, heavy and specifically shaped wooden cross. So his mystical body is incarnate in finite human history, crucified upon a hard, material and specifically shaped human society. But just as the reality of Christ's cross for the human mind does not stop short at its material shape, so the reality of the Church does not stop short at the material expressions of infallible doctrines and creeds, that hard wooden cross which Christ himself bade his lovers to take up in following him is the gateway to heaven. When the crucified Christ is offered and offers himself on the altar of a Catholic church through the

gateway of that cross with its Victim, the faithful look up to the inaccessible glory of God in heaven. Creator and creature are linked by a double traffic of faith—adoration going up, the infinite life of God in a cascade of grace coming down.

But the priest offers this sacrifice through the power of the Holy Ghost from Pentecost. We have nothing and can do nothing without the Holy Spirit, who aids us through his gifts.

These gifts of the Holy Spirit are received through the inward love and longing for God in each human heart—expressed both in prayer, public and vocal, or silent and private; and in the acts of sharing in the sacraments given by the Church.

The gifts correspond in a mysterious way to the action of the 'finger of God's right hand' in tracing within us the character or pattern which makes us able to receive the divine life of God. A jewel will not fit into a setting unless this is the right shape to receive it. In the same way, the divine life of God can come into our natures only in so far as the divine finger has prepared a place for it. It is this preparation, this capacity to receive the divine life which is the work of the gifts of the spirit.

We cannot truly receive a sacrament without the Holy Spirit: we cannot receive any divine life (or grace) at all without baptism (in the widest sense), still less are we capable of receiving divine comforts and powers without the gifts which enable us. He is the 'source of all our store'.

This is not the place to recapitulate the doctrine of the gifts. It is only possible to add a few notes on the gift of understanding, which seems to be most closely connected with the interpretation of scripture and the special needs of our time, both inside and outside the Church.

According to John of St Thomas (explaining St Thomas Aquinas), through the gift of understanding the Holy Ghost 'enlightens a man's mind to know supernatural truth', through this gift the virtue of faith is enlightened. The soul is illumined so that it may proceed without confusion and error. Most important is the fact that 'the gift of understanding does not judge analytically, nor does it reason

about supernatural truths through their causes. From an interior impulse of the Holy Ghost and from an affection towards spiritual things, it discerns spiritual realities from corporeal (i.e. truth from 'carnal reasoning') and separates the things to be believed from . . . errors'. This gift is necessary for a true interpretation of the Bible—the Spirit interprets the Spirit.

One who has this gift in an eminent degree is said to 'suffer divine things' because he is 'stirred to love, and is moved by the Holy Ghost above the level measured by human rules'. There are many believers outside the Church whose faith is of this sort, based on a personal experience or 'suffering of divine things'. It is that characteristic of heretical belief, the exaggeration of a partial truth into a system mentioned above, which seeks to define all faith as necessarily of this sort, dependent on personal experience.

The following passage from John of St Thomas's treatise on the gifts might have been written by any 'mystic': 'There is a difference between assent by belief and assent by penetration and experience. One who believes adheres to the testimony which has been offered, and his action is restricted to assent, for he neither seeks nor probes further. Understanding, however, penetrates to the core, investigates the hidden reaches of the thing, extending even to its antecedents. It strives to lift the veil and to illuminate the darkness. . . . On the other hand, through faith a man comes to a cloud-enshrouded mountain. In faith the mind is held captive, the eye is covered, and a man walks through a deserted path to the mountain of God. Finally in that desert land, without paths, without water, he appears in the holy place of God. This is the not uncommon experience of those who are constant in prayer with only naked and dry faith. The soul seems arid and its tongue seems to cling to the side of its mouth, for it can only believe and cannot penetrate the mysteries of God.'

However, when the Holy Ghost begins to breathe upon the soul, and to melt the frozen waters with his Spirit through the gift of understanding, he lays open the hidden meaning of things. Through the breath of his charity, which he places in the soul, there is an interior sense and taste of

the sweetness of the Lord. Then surely "as a torrent in the south" (Ps. 125, 4), he ends the captivity of the mind, just as a torrent frozen solid is loosed by warm air. Clouds are dispersed, and the aroma of the mysteries of faith, like the odour of a ploughed field, is spread abroad. The eyes of the soul are as doves, dwelling not in the barren and arid land, but alongside a full stream. The soul is filled with marrow and fatness by the light which is poured into it, and its prayer is like incense in the sight of God. All these things are the results of the gift.' (*The Gifts of the Holy Ghost*, by John of St Thomas, translated by Fr Hughes, o.p.)

This passage was written at the beginning of the seventeenth century, at the same time as so many Puritan accounts of religious experience. And now we find Fr Victor White writing: 'Every baptised Christian, it might be inferred, is a "propheta" a receiver of revelation by calling and status and inherent quality . . . in a way which no Old Testament prophet could be.'³

In different ways these theologians, so separated by time, nationality, even education, are affirming the same truth, the 'gift of the Spirit to every Christian'.

But if every Christian experiences and interprets divine truth for himself, in isolation, it becomes hopelessly entangled within the meshes of each individual's intellectual experiences and powers; the whirlwind and the flames of Pentecost become meaningless. These terrifying signs testified to the special descent of the third Person of the Holy Trinity upon the whole Church, guaranteeing it corporately against teaching errors.

After meditating on the wonderful effects of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, each making possible the raising, directing and strengthening of human faculties into a life lived on a supernatural level, united to Christ, it is impossible not to see everywhere the misery, ugliness and confusion which are all that man, despite his dreams, is able to produce without divine help. It must be admitted before the chaos of the world today, that virtue is not enough to raise a fallen humanity towards its Creator. The Saviour has come, the Holy Spirit has come, both divine Persons are with us,

³ *God and the Unconscious*, by V. White, o.p. (1952), p. 137.

the one drawing us and shaping us ever more closely towards the other who is the way to the Father.

We must learn to love the Spirit within us, the 'soul's delightful guest', to long for him and to pray ardently to him. Indeed, this inward prayer to the Holy Spirit is the very beginning and foundation of all religion, of any attempt to become more like Christ, any hope of bringing Christ the Saviour to an almost lost world.

Edward Grubb is right when he says: 'The greatest need of our time is the recovery and the fearless proclamation by word and life of the religion of the Spirit'.

SONGS OF ZARATHUSHTRA. By Dastur Frambroze Bode and Pilov Nana-vulty. (Alan and Unwin; 3s. 6d.)

The Gathas of Zoroaster are one of the most difficult texts in any language, and no translation can lay claim to finality. The present volume, however, reads more like a paraphrase and at times degenerates into a re-interpretation of Zoroaster's thought in the light of more modern, vaguely 'theosophical' ideas. Like many books in the series it makes prolific use of capital letters and for simple ideas substitutes prolix phraseology. What, for example, is gained by translating the word for 'fire' as 'His Flaming Fire of Thought'? Or why seek to explain away the enigmatic 'Soul of the Kine' by a generalised 'Soul of Creation', suggestive as it is of neo-Platonic ideas which are singularly ill at ease in the primitive Zoroastrian community? The introduction too is crammed with subjective views of what the authors would have liked Zoroaster to have said. The most glaring example of this is the statement that 'to achieve his mission', Zoroaster 'formed the Circle of Contemplative Thought', which the authors admit in the next line is 'not thus mentioned by name'. Why then drag it in?

As a translation of this difficult text the book has little value, and is certainly not in the same class of Duchesne's (*Zoroastre*, Paris, 1948). It is perhaps of value as showing how a Parsi High Priest interprets the ancient hymns of the founder of his religion. In this it is to be preferred to the more considerable books of Nyberg and Herzfeld who have sought respectively to transform the Prophet of ancient Iran into a witch-doctor and backstairs politician respectively. Zoroaster, the Mystic, is more convincing than either of these. However, to those who are primarily interested in what Zoroaster actually said, the book cannot be honestly recommended.

R. C. ZAEHNER