

into truth generally, into all truth undiscovered or unrevealed, but into all the truth. The truth itself was once for all delivered to the saints; but it lay before them as a Promised Land, into the full possession and enjoyment of which the Holy Ghost would lead and guide them.

The Holy Ghost had no new revelation to make to mankind. His mission was that of an interpreter and guide. He was not to speak from Himself. He was to take of the things of Christ to declare them to His Church. Christ Himself, His work, His words, and His life, were to be the subjects with which the Holy Ghost should deal interpreting their significance, their power, their loveliness to the sons of men. Such an interpretation could not be made at once in all its completeness, it must be gradual and progressive, proportioned to the needs and capacities of successive generations. Age after age His work would still go on, guiding the Church and guiding individuals into all the truth, opening up new aspects of the truth, enlarging our conceptions of words and events already familiar, declaring to us their special message for each particular age, building up from generation to generation the great temple of the truth.

The history of the Church of Christ has furnished a continuous illustration of the fulfilment of Christ's promise. We see it in the gradual growth and development of Christian doctrine and Christian worship. The formation of creeds themselves was in strict accordance with the interpretation of Christ's promise. There is nothing to be found in them which was not already contained in the teaching of the Apostles and afterwards in the Holy Scriptures; but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the creeds present these truths in a concentrated and practical form. Even the latter additions made to them by the Councils of the Church contain nothing new in themselves, but only a fresh presentation of truth to meet the circumstances of particular times, and to guard the sacred deposit from some prevalent error or from some practical defect. And so it has ever been in the history of the Church. From age to age we can hardly fail to trace in the development of Christian faith and Christian life the overruling guidance of the Holy Ghost, directing the minds of men for a time to some particular aspect of the truth, according as His infinite wisdom and love discerned a convenient season or foresaw some coming need. From the Day of Pentecost until now He has been leading us into all the truth. Our own branch of the Catholic Church, even within the past century, will furnish us with helpful illustrations of this principle, and with no uncertain evidence of the guiding hand of the Holy Ghost.

The Great Evangelical uprising in the latter part of the past century, laying anew the deep foundation of the Christian hope; the Oxford Movement of fifty years ago, turning the thoughts of men to the constitution and characteristics of the Church of Christ, and teaching them to see in it no mere human society, but the extension of the incarnate life of Christ Himself and the sphere of the operation of God the Holy Ghost; the revival in our own days of the long-dormant privileges of Divine worship with its glad voices and its holy strains, making the hearts of them rejoice that seek the Lord; in all these various advances of Christian faith and Christian life we can hardly fail to trace the guiding of the Holy Ghost. In each of these movements there may have been error or defect, narrowness or extravagance, mistakes inseparable from all human operations even when associated with the working of Divine power. But when all that is earthly has been eliminated, or in its transitory nature has passed away, there remains the precious residuum of the spiritual truth into which the Holy Ghost has guided the Church. How different does the religious history of the Church appear, even in our own generation, when we have learned to associate its events and influences not with the names of individual leaders who were permitted to take some prominent part in the movements of their day, but to see in every phase and epoch of religious revival the unceasing fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, "He shall lead you into all the truth."

My purpose, in what I have been saying, has been to press home upon you and upon myself the abiding

reality of our Saviour's promise, and its living power in our own day; to regard it as a promise made to ourselves as truly as it was made to the holy Apostles; a promise which, amidst all the perplexities and difficulties of our daily life, we may ever hear in the silence of the heart, speaking to each and all of us, to the Church itself and to the individual Christian the words of comfort: "He shall guide you into all the truth." To us, my right reverend brethren, to whom so much has been given, and of whom so much shall be required, how full of consolation and of encouragement are these words of Christ! Amidst all our deliberations and discussions in the solemn conference which has brought us together at this time shall we not find our strength and stay in the unfailing help of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and rest from day to day on the Master's promise—"He shall guide you into all the truth"?

But I have further wished to make it clear to myself and to you on what conditions and within what limitations we may expect its fulfilment; that we are not to look for any addition to revealed truth, but only for a clearer light and deeper insight into the word and works and ways of God.

A single illustration will make my meaning clear. Another branch of the Catholic Church has, in our own day, proclaimed to the world as infallibly true, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is manifestly an addition to the body of revealed truth. Nothing but a special revelation from God could have made known to mankind a fact which could only be one of the deepest secrets of His Divine operation. There is no word in Holy Scripture which could give support to such a dogma. Without this it could only be at most a pious speculation. But Rome has now given it a place in the first rank of Divine mysteries. It is easy to see what has led to such a step. The gradually developed cultus of the Holy Virgin, and the adoration addressed to her in the devotions of the Roman Church, demanded for their justification some such idea of her elevation above the level of even the highest and holiest humanity, and a freedom from the inheritance of taint and weakness which rests upon every member of the human family. But we cannot see in this the fulfilment of our Saviour's promise. It is no part of the Truth once delivered to the saints—the Truth into which the Holy Spirit was to lead the Church of Christ. It is a new Gospel; it is a new order of humanity; it is something added to the words of the book.

It may be well for us, and particularly on an occasion such as this, that we should consider one or two directions in which the Church of Christ at the present time, and we its members, need more especially the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It must surely appear to every thoughtful mind that in these days in which we live there is an amount of what may be called spiritual movement, which has probably no parallel in the earlier ages of the Church. I have called it spiritual, although, no doubt, it is on one side intellectual, while on the other hand, the eyes which are earnestly gazing into mysteries half-revealed and half-concealed are, to use the expression of the Apostle, the eyes of the heart. There is a strange and beautiful commingling of mental unrest with longing desire.

Take, for instance, the question now stirring in so many hearts, and more and more from year to year—the question of the unity of the Church of Christ and the reunion of its divided branches. It is surely impossible to doubt that all these efforts and these longings have their first spring in the guiding of the Holy Ghost. They cannot arise from the mere activity of busybodies or from the idle dreams of vacant minds. Is it not that the Lord and Life-giver is breathing with His quickening breath upon souls whom He has chosen and prepared—waking up in them the thought of the one Body and stirring in them the desire for the oneness of the Faith, in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace? At such a time how much we need His promised guidance! How much we need the constant prayer that He who has put into our minds good desires may bring the same to good effect! The question is one as full of difficulty as it is of attractive interest, but the special direction

in which we need the guidance of the Holy Ghost is in the necessity which lies upon us to distinguish more carefully between what St. Augustine has called the *necessaria* and the *dubia* between matters which are fixed and determined by the Word of God and by the voice of the universal Church, and those which in the wisdom of God have been left without clear definition or complete solution—about which there is room for such pious speculation and diversity of opinion as need not divide us from one another, so long as those opinions are not converted into articles of faith or insisted upon as of general obligation. But for this difficult, yet urgently needed work of discrimination, we deeply need, and we should most surely receive, the promised help of the Holy Spirit. It will certainly not be settled by newspaper controversy or by heated utterances of party spirit. Amidst these the guiding voice of the Holy Spirit will scarce be heard. Into such an arena He cannot enter:

He can but listen at the gate,

And hear the household far within.

Meanwhile, from many sides and from unexpected quarters, the growing desire is more frequently and more freely expressed for the drawing together of the separated branches of the Church of Christ—a desire the existence of which we may well attribute to the working of the Holy Ghost. It is for us to seek His guidance, with a ready will to follow where He leads, or to pause where He bars the way. If only we are a willing people in the day of His power He will guide us into all the truth.

There are other questions which will occur to many of you—questions which have long lain dormant, but are now asserting themselves in the hearts and consciences of Christian people. To take but one instance. Who is not conscious of the ever-widening and deepening desire among all sorts and conditions of men to gain some knowledge of the condition and experiences of those who are hidden from us by the drapery of death, who have passed into some inner mansion of the heavenly Father's house? How widespread and how strong is the interest now felt by devout men and women in that mysterious stage in the life of the soul and of its progress which lies between its departure from this passing world and its final consummation and Bliss in the life everlasting. Nor is this a mere matter for pious speculation. It has its practical issues of a very real kind. For the question opens up other enquiries which largely affect the Christian life and the Christian hope. Everywhere our people are asking what are their relations to the departed, what community of spiritual fellowship is possible between them, what intercourse of thought or feeling, what personal affection, what mutual knowledge, above all, what reciprocity of prayer? On all these questions the Word of God is very remarkably silent, and we can hope for no further revelation to enlighten our minds and to comfort our hearts. But in the words of our Lord and His Apostles—and in the instincts of the enlightened conscience—and in the aspirations of sanctified hearts there are suggestions and intimations which need only to be fully and rightly understood to shed light upon the dimness or even the darkness of that hidden world and to guide both our thoughts and our prayers into the way of peace. And the Holy Spirit will not fail us. He will guide us into all the truth.

Does it not seem to you that in the light of Christ's promise, and in the face of our manifold needs, there is a call for increased devotion to God the Holy Ghost? We have heard it frequently said in another branch of the Catholic Church that what we need is an age of Mary; that is to say, we may well suppose an age in which she would be more and more exalted and worshipped, and her aid and mercy invoked as the panacea for the sins and the ills of the human race, and for the final salvation of mankind. With all the affectionate veneration for the Mother of our Lord which every faithful Christian must feel and show, it is not to her that we must look for guidance or for safety. What we rather need is an age of God the Holy Ghost, an age in which there should spring up and