

XXI.

The Love of the Holy Spirit in Us.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.”—*Matt. xxvii. 37.*



The Scripture teaches not only that the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and with Him Love, but also that He *sheds abroad that Love in our hearts.*

This *shedding abroad* does not refer to the coming of the Holy Spirit's Person, for a *person* can not be shed abroad. He comes, takes possession, and dwells in us; but that which is shed abroad must consist of numberless particles. The verb “to pour out” (to shed abroad) is used primarily of water, grain, or fruit; *i.e.*, of liquids or solids composed of parts or particles of one kind, passing from one vessel into another. In Scripture the verb is used metaphorically. Hannah said: “I ‘have poured out my soul before the Lord” (1 *Sam. i. 15*); the Psalmist: “Pour out your heart before Him” (*Psalm lxii. 8*); Isaiah: “They poured out a prayer before Him.” (*Isa. xxvi. 16*) “To pour out,” always signifies that the heart is filled to overflowing with so many complaints, cares, griefs, or distresses that it can no longer contain them, but pours them out before God or men in groans and prayers.

With reference to God, we read that He poured out the fierceness of His anger upon His enemies; and again, “that He shall pour out the Spirit of prayer and supplication.” In the *first* passage, the metaphor is borrowed from the hail-storm which overtakes the traveler and prostrates him. So shall the blows of divine wrath descend like hail upon the heads of its enemies and prostrate them. And in the *second* it is signified that with overwhelming power His people shall be constrained to prayer.

In this latter sense, the Scripture frequently applies it to the advent of the Holy Spirit. Both prophets and apostles declare that the Lord shall pour out His Spirit upon all. Finally, we read that the Holy Spirit was poured out. But even here the primary meaning of the word must be retained, for by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit we understand the flowing down into our hearts, or into the Church, of a multitude of powers of the same kind that fill the emptiness of the soul.



It may be objected—and this deserves careful consideration—that in this thought we contradict our former statement, that it is the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Trinity, who takes possession of the heart and, dwells therein; for we now say that it is, not the *Person* who *comes in*, but a *working*, an *element*, a *power* which is *poured out*. But, instead of being contradictory, these two are the same; only, by their mutual connection, they give us a more correct insight—and that is just what we need. When I carry a lighted lamp into a dark room, *I enter* as the light-bearer, while at the same moment the light is *poured out* in the room. These two should not be confounded. I am not poured out, but the light. I enter the

room, but the light is carried into it. And this is exactly what the Holy Spirit does. When He enters the heart the brightness of His Person is poured out therein.

It is true that in these cases the Holy Spirit is mentioned in a somewhat *modified* sense, but when we speak of the light the same is true. Of an approaching light we say, "There comes the light," altho we know that some one carries the light. At sunrise we say, "The sun is rising," altho it would be more correct to say: "The light of the sun is rising." In like manner the name of the Holy Spirit is used in Scripture in a twofold way: *first*, with reference to the Third Person in the Trinity; *secondly*, with reference to the heavenly brightness and blessed activity which He carries with Himself. And instead of being more or less incorrect, this two-fold use of the name is much more correct with reference to the Holy Spirit than when it refers to artificial light or to the sun. We should remember that there is a difference between the lamp and its radiating light; and that the immense body of the sun and its light are also two different things. But this is not so with reference to the Holy Spirit. There is no difference between Himself and His operations. We make the distinction to assist our representation, but in reality it has no existence. Where the Holy Spirit is, there He works; and where He works, there is the Holy Spirit. They are the same. The one is even unthinkable without the other.

There is an advantage in the use of the metaphor "to pour out." It teaches that the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the congregation of the elect is neither inactive, nor from compulsion keeping himself aloof from their persons; but that He can not come among them without *pouring Himself out* in them. And, dwelling in the elect, He does not slumber, nor does He keep an eternal Sabbath, in idleness shutting Himself up in their hearts; but as the divine Worker He seeks from within to fill their individual persons, pouring the stream of His divine brightness through every space.

But we should not imagine that every believer is instantly filled and permeated with that brightness. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit finds him filled with all manner of evil and treachery. Iniquities are piled up on every side. Horrible sins rise from underneath. The consciousness of his bitter, spiritual misery harasses him. Moreover, his heart is divided by many walls and partitions. Even the brightest light can not penetrate the whole at once; and by far the greater part remains for the present at least in deepest darkness.

From this it follows that, when the Holy Spirit has entered man's heart, His task is not ended, but only just begun—a task so difficult that the power of the Holy Spirit alone can perform it. His method of procedure is not with divine power to *force* a man as tho he were a stock or block, but by the power of love and compassion so to influence and energize the impulses of the feeble will that it feels the effect, is inclined, and finally consents to be the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Being once firmly established, He gradually subjects the most hidden impulses and intentions of the saint's personality to the power of His Love, in order thus to prevail. For this

end He uses at once the *external* means of the preached Word which penetrates the consciousness and takes hold of the person, and the *internal* operation of blessing the Word and making it effectual. This operation is different in each person. In one it proceeds with marvelous rapidity; in another, progress is exceedingly slow, being checked by serious reaction which in some rare cases is overcome only with the last breath. There are scarcely two men in whom this gracious operation is completely the same.

It may not be denied that the Holy Spirit often meets serious opposition on the part of the saint: not from enmity, for he is an enemy no more, but because he is commanded to depart from sin, to renounce his idols, his sinful affections, the many things that seem indispensable to his joy and life, and especially when, pointing to the cross, the Holy Spirit imposes sacrifices, pursues him with afflictions, covers him with ignominy. Then that opposition can become so strong and grievous that one would almost say: "He is no more a child of God."

And the Holy Spirit bears all this resistance with infinite pity, and overcomes it and casts it out with eternal mercy. Who that is not a stranger to his own heart does not remember how many years it took before he would yield a certain point of resistance; how he always avoided facing it; restlessly opposed it, at last thought to end the matter by arranging for a sort of *modus vivendi* between himself and the Holy Spirit? But the Holy Spirit did not cease, gave him no rest; again and again that familiar knock was heard, the calling in his heart of that familiar voice. And after years of resistance he could not but yield in the end; it became like fire in his bones, and he cried out: "*Thou, Lord, art stronger than I; Thou hast prevailed.*"

In this way the Holy Spirit breaks down every wall of partition, pouring out His light in all the heart's empty spaces, gradually opening every door, gaining access to the soul's most secret chambers, even to the vaults underneath the structure of our being, until finally, either *before* or *in* death, the outpouring of His brightness is complete in all our personality, and the whole heart has become His temple.

This task is executed only by means of Love. The Holy Spirit allows Himself to be grieved, provoked, and insulted; but He never yields. He is never weary of repeating the same thing to the ear that once was deaf. In our past or present there can be no sin, however base, of which He does not comfort us, which He does not pardon. He gives healing balm for every inward wound. He always has a word in good season for all that are weary. It is Love always filling us with shame; but at the same time ever uplifting, never despairing, unceasing in its devotion.

It is not merely a Love for men in general, but in the most exclusive sense a personal Love for the individual; not only Love for the redeemed taken as a multitude, but a Love individual, peculiarly tinted to meet the special peculiarity of our being. It is not only a pity



for all who suffer, like that of the nurse for the patients of her ward, but Love that can not meet the need of any one else, but is for me personally just what it must and can not otherwise be.

Hence the divine patience in winning *thee*. One might say:.. “There are thousands of others whom He might take and influence with much less trouble perhaps.” But that is not the question. With all the depth of His divine Love He sought thee personally. It is Love in the richest, purest, tenderest sense of the word.

The Holy Spirit prevails by loving us, by proving His Love, by breathing Love, while, at the same time, His victory carries Love *into our hearts*. Allow Him to enter your soul, and He will carry Love therein, which imperceptibly imparts itself to your heart and inclination. We yield, not because we are compelled by superior power, but being drawn by Love, we are so affected that we can not resist it.

And this is the glorious, divine, and beautiful art of which the Holy Spirit is the chief Artist. He alone understands it, and they whom He has taught. All other love is but a feeble shadow or faint imitation. Not until through Love the Holy Spirit has prevailed can Love enter our hearts, and then we, the formerly sinful and selfish, learn to appreciate Love.



XXII.

Love and the Comforter.

“By the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned.”—[2 Cor. vi. 6](#).

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The question is, “In what sense is the *pouring out of Love* an ever-continued, never-finished work?”

Love is here taken in its highest, purest sense. Love which gives its goods to the poor and its body to be burned is out of the question. St. Paul declares that one may do these things and still be nothing more than a sounding brass, utterly devoid of the least spark of the true and real Love.

In [2 Cor. vi. 6](#) the apostle mentions the motives of his zeal for the cause of Christ; and it is remarkable that among them he mentions these three, in the following order: “By *goodness*, by the *Holy Ghost*, by *love unfeigned*.” Goodness indicates general benevolence and readiness to sacrifice; of these we find among worldly men many examples that make us ashamed. Then comes the stimulating and animating influences of the Holy Spirit; lastly, Love unfeigned which is the true, real, and divine Love.

In his hymn of eternal Love the apostle gives us an exquisite delineation of this “Love unfeigned;” which shall not cease to command the admiration of the saints on earth as long as taste for heavenly melodies shall dwell in their hearts:

“Love suffereth long and is kind; Love envieth not; Love vaunted not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love.” ([1 Cor. xiii. 4-8, 12-13](#))

This teaches how the Holy Spirit performs His work of Love. And so, says the apostle, must the fruit of His work be in our hearts. Very well; if such is the glorious fruit of His work and men know the tree by its fruit, may we not conclude that this is but the description of His own work of Love?

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The means employed by the Holy Spirit in the shedding abroad of the Love of God in our hearts is simply *Love*. By loving us He teaches love. By applying love to us, by expending love upon us, He inculcates love on us. It is the Love of the Holy Spirit whereby the shedding abroad of love in our hearts has become possible. As, according to [1 Cor. xiii.](#), Love ought to manifest itself in our lives, so has the Holy Spirit wrought it in our hearts. With endless longsuffering and touching kindness He sought to win us. Of the love which we gave to the Father and the Son He was never envious, but rejoiced in it. His Love never made a display of us by leading us into unendurable temptations. It never impressed us as being self-seeking,