

XXII.

Love and the Comforter.

"By the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned."—2 Cor. vi. 6.

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."

This teaches how the Holy Spirit performs His work of Love.