

⁷ Charles Davis, "Theology of Preaching," *The Clergy Review*, September, 1960, *passim*.

⁸ *Omnia Opera*, In Lucam, iii, 2 (xxii, p. 265) Paris, 1880, quoted by A. Rock, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁹ A. Rock, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹⁰ *Principles of Preaching*, by Jude Nogar, O.P., River Forest, 1959.

¹¹ J. Nogar, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹² *De Doctrina Christiana*, IV, 2, quoted by J. Nogar, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

AS BRIGHT AND GLITTERING BODIES

MANY MEN TODAY are forlorn. They feel abandoned. They cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside themselves.

The great giants of man's own creation have humbled him. Our T.V. screens present the dazzling facade of the triumph of human genius. We see rockets shooting, sputniks spinning. A finger-on-the-button will unleash H-bombs and intercontinental missiles. Never before has man displayed such genius for scientific discovery and technological invention. But if one face on the edifice of man's creation shows the flame of human genius rising higher and higher, there is another, more sinister face. The gigantic toys that infatuated man now threaten to turn Frankenstein and devour him. This other face sneers at man, makes him shrink to the level of an ant hill.

And what do the masterminds of this generation do for shrunken man? They manufacture strange definitions for him. They call him an electron-proton complex, or an animal related to the ape, or a psycho-analytical bag filled by physiological drives; or a mechanism controlled by digestive and economic needs. They reduce him to smallness and make him feel like so many human ants and bees. The multitude of possibilities beyond his control force him to act without hope. There is nothing to depend upon. Man is on his own —abandoned, forlorn. So speak the prophets of despair.¹

What is the Christian to do? Can he be unconcerned; pretend not to sense the darkness of despair in the atmosphere about him? The Chicago stock yards stink. If you spend any time there, you will take some of the stench away with you. It is the same with the world around

us. If we do not live in vital contact with the truth, some falsity will rub off on us. The Christian truth about man is that he is not insignificant, unimportant, or alone. He is more powerful than the H-bomb, more extraordinary than any sputnik, rocket or ballistic missile. The greatest of man's possibilities is that his soul can be, as say the Apostles, "the temple of the Holy Spirit."

As truly as the Son of God is present in the tabernacle the Holy Spirit is present in the Christian soul. The night before He died Our Lord promised this. At the same table whereon He consecrated the Holy Eucharist, the pledge of His own presence in our souls, He said to His disciples: "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide in you for ever—the Spirit of truth . . . (who) shall abide with you and be in you."²

Our Lord did not explain how bread and wine were to become His Body and Blood; neither did He explain how this mysterious presence shall take place. But if we believe He fulfilled His Eucharistic promise, we must also believe the Holy Spirit abides within us. Pentecost fulfilled the promise. With the sound of a mighty wind and with the flickering of fiery tongues, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. From then, until now, and forever, "the Holy Spirit is given to us." And "he who abides in charity abides in God and God in him."³

It might seem that only rare people who reach the top rung on sanctity's ladder possess the Holy Spirit. Actually the lowest degree of the Christian life demands that the Holy Spirit dwell in souls. "If anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to Christ."⁴

When baptismal water initiates a baby to the Christian life, grace and charity, the sources of the new life, come to the soul accompanied by the Holy Spirit. Charity, the created image of the Holy Spirit, comes together with uncreated Love. "The charity of God is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."⁵ Likewise grace, the created gift, is always accompanied by the uncreated Gift. When the Paraclete sanctifies a soul, He pours into it ". . . not only His fragrance—the sacred ointment of His grace—but His very substance . . ."⁶ The greatest power of grace is to draw God down into our soul. This extraordinary power St. Thomas summed up thus: "Grace, making the soul pleasing, disposes it to the personal possession of God."

This possession means to have and to hold not only the Holy Spirit, but the entire Trinity. The Holy Spirit is the Love of the Father and the

Son. Where the Person of Love is, there also are the Persons of the Father and the Son. "If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him."⁷ With this sacred text in St. Augustine says:

Who dares to think—unless someone is completely ignorant of the inseparability of the Trinity—that the Father or Son can dwell in someone in whom the Holy Ghost does not dwell, or the Holy Ghost in someone in whom the Father and Son (do not dwell)?⁸

Yet the scriptures, and Christ Himself, attribute this indwelling in a special way to the Holy Spirit. Why name one Person if three are involved? This is a mental device, called appropriation, in which one Person is emphasized and the others left aside in order to show the distinction of Persons in the Trinity. This is the only way the human mind can think about the sublime mystery: three Persons in one God.⁹ By naming the Holy Spirit as the Guest of the soul the scriptures offer an inroad towards understanding this mystery, and at the same time give us a deeper knowledge of the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

The indwelling is attributed to the Holy Spirit because it is a work of love. The Holy Spirit is the Love of God. God dwells in us because He loves us. Wherever we look love brings union, or at least desire of union. God unites with man as his Guest, and so the Holy Spirit—the Love that proceeds from the Father and the Son—is named. His work within the soul images His work in the intimate life of the Trinity. At the first peek into this mystery, then, we halt amazed at a familiar sight: the unconditional triumph of God's love, and we listen joyfully to this new echo in the infinite chain resounding God's: "I love you!"

Speaking of love, however, talk should be in tune with the classicist on the subject, St. John, especially in his First Epistle. "God is love, and because of this he who abides in love abides in God and God in him."¹⁰ Thus only the bond between the Holy Spirit and charity can explain the union of God with the soul. His love descends to take possession of our souls; our love, an irresistible need-love, attracts Him; the bond of charity captures Him. The two loves seek each other. And this explanation of the indwelling has authority. For St. Thomas the basic reason why God dwells in us and remains in us, is love.¹¹ And this is the solid fact of the mystery, as contained in the scriptures and understood by the Fathers.

Like an expert in possession of the facts, St. Thomas explains that

that the great city would be destroyed in forty days time. This prediction never came about, but there is an explanation. Instead of continuing in their evil ways, the Ninivites began the most severe penances. God had mercy on them and the city was preserved. This episode gives evidence of the conditional aspect of prophecy even where the form of the announcement is absolute. The explanation is found in Jeremiah: "But if that nation which I have threatened turns from its evil, I also will repent of the evil which I threatened to do" (*Jeremiah* 18:18). Because the city did penance, therefore, God did not destroy it. Although his prediction never came about, the reputation of Jona as a true prophet is saved.

Some prophets worked miracles, some did not. Some wrote their prophecies, some did not. Some predicted the future, some did not. But they all had one thing in common. They were the mouthpieces of God and all were charged to deliver the word of God. Their sole rôle was to communicate to men the knowledge of divine revelation. That the prophets be spokesmen of God, two things were vitally necessary: revelation and mission. God must speak to the prophet and commission the prophet to pass on the knowledge to men. St. Thomas gives the reason for these conditions when he says that prophecy consists essentially in knowledge and secondarily in speech.

It essentially consists in knowledge because, "Prophets know things which are far removed from man's knowledge" (II-II, 171, 1). The prophet, then, knows secrets which he could not know of himself without divine revelation. After receiving the prophetic knowledge, he must be commissioned to unfold to men God's secrets and to transmit in the name of Yahweh a teaching of truth. The mission to communicate truths to others is usually accomplished through speech. Hence St. Thomas says, "Prophecy consists secondarily in speech in so far as the prophets declare for the instruction of others the things which God has taught them" (*Ibid.*).

In addition, there are some examples of symbolic actions accompanying the speech. In evidence of these, Isaia played the rôle of a captive in order to impress on the Israelites the necessity of reliance on their God rather than reliance on the Egyptians. Yahweh ordered him to go for three years without clothes or shoes to represent the subjection of Egypt and Kush to Assyria. This action of Isaia impressed on the people the uselessness of reliance on Egypt and Kush, themselves doomed to subjection and captivity. By the symbolic action of breaking a potter's vessel, Jeremiah foretold the destruction of the Jews because of their sins. This same

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temptation, in suffering, in grief, in desolation, in joy, in everything the Three Divine Persons are the best company for God-bearers!

"As bright and glittering bodies touched
by a ray become themselves beyond measure
brilliant,
so the souls who bear the Spirit and are
illuminated by the Spirit become themselves
spiritual . . .

From this source is perseverance in God,
from this source similitude with God. . . .
from this source you become godlike."

(St. Basil¹⁵)

—Daniel Hickey, O.P.

¹ The definitions reducing man to an inorganic or organic complex are those of *contemporary science* (See P. A. Sorokin, *The Crisis of Our Age*, Dutton Paperback, N. Y., 1957, p. 244.), but the terminology concluding this paragraph is coined by contemporary existentialist philosophy.

² *John* 14:16, 17.

³ *I John* 4:16.

⁴ *Rom.* 8:9.

⁵ *Rom.* 5:5.

⁶ St. Augustine, Sermon 185, *de Temp.*

⁷ *John* 14:23.

⁸ Epistula 187 (ad Dardanum. *De Praesentia Dei*), 5:16.

⁹ St. Thomas briefly indicates the motive for appropriation: "For the manifestation of our faith." (Cf. *Summa Theologiae*. I, q. 39, a. 7.)

¹⁰ *I John* 4:16.

¹¹ A more adequate summation of St. Thomas' teaching on the Trinitarian presence would not neglect the part played by full supernatural knowledge. We are accurate, however, since this kind of knowledge proceeds from love and produces love. This is not a knowledge had from faith alone, but from faith completely impregnated with love. Since God is at its origin and also at its end this is an experimental knowledge in which the soul knows God, not intellectually and abstractly—as in faith by itself—but concretely, establishing a direct contact of the soul with God to achieve the presence of the indwelling Persons. (Cf. Francis L. B. Cunningham, O.P., *The Indwelling of the Trinity*, Priory Press, Dubuque, 1955, pp. 196-202; J.-H. Nicholas, O.P., *The Mystery of God's Grace*, Priory Press, 1960, pp. 51-56.

¹² William J. Hill, O.P., *The Proper Relations to the Indwelling Divine Persons*, Thomist Press, Washington, p. 116.

¹³ Encyclical *Divinum Munus*, May, 1897.

¹⁴ *The Proper Relations to the Indwelling Divine Persons*, loc. cit.

¹⁵ *Adv. Eun.* 9:22.