

OF THE HOLY GHOST

CCXLI.

The Holy Ghost has two Offices: first, he is a Spirit of Grace, that makes God gracious unto us, and receive us as His acceptable children, for Christ's sake. Secondly, He is a Spirit of prayer, Who prays for us, and for the whole world, to the end that all evil may be turned from us, and that all good may happen to us. The Spirit of Grace teaches people; the Spirit of Prayer prays. It is a wonder how one thing is accomplished various ways. It is one thing to have the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of prophecy, and another to have the revealing of the same; for many have had the Holy Spirit before the birth of Christ, and yet he was not revealed unto them. We do not separate the Holy Ghost from faith; neither do we teach that he is against faith; for He is the certainty itself in the world, that makes us sure and certain of the Word; so that, without all wavering or doubting, we certainly believe that it is even so and no otherwise than as God's Word says and is delivered unto us. But the Holy Ghost is given to none without the Word.

Mohammed, the pope, papists, Antinomians, and other sectaries, have no certainty at all, neither can they be sure of these things; for they depend not on God's Word, but on their own righteousness. And when they have done many and great works, yet they always stand in doubt, and say: Who knows whether this which we have done be pleasing to God or no; or, whether we have done works enough or no? They must continually think with themselves, We are still unworthy. But a true and godly Christian, between these two doubts, is sure and certain, and says: I nothing regard these doubtings; I neither look upon my holiness, nor upon my unworthiness, but I believe in Jesus Christ, Who is both holy and worthy; and whether I be holy or unholy, yet I am sure and certain, that Christ gives Himself, with all His holiness, worthiness, and what He is and has, to be mine own. For my part, I am a poor sinner, and that I am sure of out of God's Word. Therefore, the Holy Ghost only and alone is able to say: Jesus Christ is the Lord; the Holy Ghost teaches, preaches, and declares Christ.

The Holy Ghost goes first and before in what pertains to teaching; but in what concerns hearing, the Word goes first and before, and then the Holy Ghost follows after. For we must first hear the Word, and then afterwards the Holy Ghost works in our hearts; he works in the hearts of whom he will, and how he will, but never without the Word.

CCXLII.

The Holy Ghost began his office and his work openly on Whit-Sunday; for he gave to the apostles and disciples of Christ, a true and certain comfort in their hearts, and a secure and joyful courage, insomuch that they regarded not whether the world and the devil were merry or

sad, friends or enemies, angry or pleased. They went in all security up and down the streets of the city, and doubtless they had these, or the like thoughts: We regard neither Annas or Caiaphas, Pilate nor Herod; they are nothing worth, we all in all; they are our subjects and servants, we their lords and rulers.

So went the loving apostles on, in all courage, without seeking leave or license.

They asked not whether they should preach or no, or whether the priests and people would allow it. O, no! They went on boldly, they opened their mouths freely, and reprov'd all the people, rulers and subjects, as murderers, wicked wretches, and traitors, who had slain the Prince of Life.

And this Spirit, so needful and necessary at that time for the apostles and disciples, is now needful for us: for our adversaries accuse us, like as were the apostles, as rebels and disturbers of the peace of the Church. Whatsoever evil happens, that, say they, have we done or caused. In popedom, say they, it was not so evil as it is since this doctrine came in; now we have all manner of mischief, dearth, wars, and the Turks. Of this they lay all the fault to our preaching, and, if they could, would charge us with being the cause of the devil's falling from heaven; yea, would say we had crucified and slain Christ also.

Therefore the Whitsuntide sermons of the Holy Ghost are very needful for us, that thereby we may be comforted, and with boldness condemn and slight such blaspheming, and that the Holy Ghost may put boldness and courage into our hearts, that we may stoutly thrust ourselves forward, let who will be offended, and let who will reproach us, and, that although, sects and heresies arise, we may not regard them. Such a courage there must be that cares for nothing, but boldly and freely acknowledges and preaches Christ, who of wicked hands was crucified and slain. The preached gospel is offensive in all places of the world, rejected and condemned. If the Gospel did not offend and anger citizen or countryman, prince or bishop, then it would be a fine and acceptable preaching, and might well be tolerated, and people would willingly hear and receive it. But seeing it is a kind of preaching which makes people angry, especially the great and powerful, and deep-learned ones of the world, great courage is necessary, and the Holy Ghost, to those that intend to preach it.

It was, indeed, undaunted courage in the poor fishers, the apostles, to stand up and preach so that the whole council at Jerusalem were offended, to bring upon themselves the wrath of the whole government, spiritual and temporal - yea, of the Roman emperor himself. Truly this could not have been done without the Holy Ghost. `Twas a great wonder that the high-priest, and Pontius Pilate, did not cause these preachers that hour to be put to death, what they said smacking so much of rebellion against the spiritual and temporal government; yet both high-priest and Pilate were struck with fear to the end that God might show his power in the apostle's weakness. Thus it is with the church of Christ: it goes on in apparent weakness; and yet in its weakness, there is such mighty strength and power, that all the worldly-wise and powerful must stand amazed thereat and fear.

It is testified by Holy Scripture, and the Nicene creed out of Holy Scripture teaches that the Holy Ghost is he who makes alive, and, together with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified. Therefore the Holy Ghost, of necessity, must be true and everlasting God with the Father and the Son, in one only essence. For if He were not true and everlasting God, then could not be attributed and given unto Him the divine power and honor that he makes alive, and together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; on this point the Fathers powerfully set themselves against the heretics, upon the strength of the Holy Scripture.

The Holy Ghost is not such a comforter as the world is, where neither truth nor constancy is, but He is a true, an everlasting, and a constant Comforter, without deceit and lies; he is one whom no man can deceive. He is called a Witness, because he bears witness only of Christ and of none other; without his testimony concerning Christ, there is no true or firm comfort. Therefore all rests on this, that we take sure hold of the text, and say: I believe in Jesus Christ, who died for me; and I know that the Holy Ghost, who is called, and is a witness and a comforter, preaches and witnesses in Christendom of none, but only of Christ, therewith to strengthen and comfort all sad and sorrowful hearts. Thereon will I also remain, depending upon none other for comfort. Our blessed Saviour Christ himself preaches that the Holy Ghost is everlasting and Almighty God. Otherwise he would not have directed his commission thus: Go, and teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teach them to keep and observe all things whatsoever I have commanded of you. It must by necessity follow, that the Holy Ghost is true, eternal God, equal in power and might with the Father, and the Son, without all end. Likewise Christ says: *"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him."* Mark well this sentence, for herein we find the difference of the three persons distinctly held out unto us: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter." Here we have two persons - Christ the Son that prays, and the Father that is prayed unto. Now, if the Father shall give such a comforter, then the Father himself cannot be that comforter; neither can Christ, that prays, be the same; so that very significantly the three persons are here plainly pictured and portrayed unto us. For even as the Father and the Son are two distinct and sundry persons, so the third person of the Holy Ghost is another distinct person, and yet notwithstanding there is but one only everlasting God.

Now, what the same third person is, Christ teaches (John, xv.): *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, Whom proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me."* Which is Christ.

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