

The Feast of Pentecost

THE APOSTLES' CREED

So far we have heard the first part of Christian doctrine. We have seen all that God wants us to do or not to do. Now there properly follows the Creed, which sets forth to us everything that we must expect and receive from God. To state it quite briefly, the Creed teaches us to know Him fully [Ephesians 3:19]. This is intended to help us do what we ought to do according to the Ten Commandments. For (as said above) the Ten Commandments are set so high that all human ability is far too feeble and weak to keep them. Therefore, it is just as necessary to learn this part of Christian doctrine as to learn the former. Then we may know how to attain what they command, both where and how to receive such power. For if we could by our own powers keep the Ten Commandments as they should be kept, we would need nothing further, neither the Creed nor the Lord's Prayer. But before we explain this advantage and necessity of the Creed, it is enough at first for the simpleminded to learn to comprehend and understand the Creed itself.

THE APOSTLES' CREED – THE THIRD ARTICLE

Neither you nor I could ever know anything about Christ, or believe on Him, and have Him for our Lord, unless it were offered to us and granted to our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel [1 Corinthians 12:3; Galatians 4:6]. The work of redemption is done and accomplished [John 19:30]. Christ has acquired and gained the treasure for us by His suffering, death, resurrection, and so on [Colossians 2:3]. But if the work remained concealed so that no one knew about it, then it would be useless and lost. So that this treasure might not stay buried, but be received and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed. In the Word He has the Holy Spirit bring this treasure home and make it our own. Therefore, sanctifying is just bringing us to Christ so we receive this good, which we could not get ourselves [1 Peter 3:18]. ...

You see, all this is the Holy Spirit's office and work. He begins and daily increases holiness upon earth through these two things: the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sin. But in our death He will

accomplish it altogether in an instant [1 Corinthians 15:52] and will forever preserve us therein by the last two parts [of the Creed].

But the term “resurrection of the flesh” used here does not agree with good German wording. For when we Germans hear the word flesh [*Fleisch*], we think of nothing more than a butcher block. But in good German wording we would say “resurrection of the body.” However, it is not a big issue, as long as we understand the words right.

Now this is the article of the Creed that must always be and remain in use. For we have already received creation. Redemption, too, is finished. But the Holy Spirit carries on His work without ceasing to the Last Day. For that purpose He has appointed a congregation upon earth by which He speaks and does everything.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

Here a question arises by which the devil, through his sects, confuses the world: Infant Baptism. Do children also believe? Are they rightly baptized? Briefly we say about this, let the simple dismiss this question from their minds. Refer it to the learned. But if you wish to answer, answer as follows:

The Baptism of infants is pleasing to Christ, as is proved well enough from His own work. For God sanctifies many of those who have been baptized as infants and has given them the Holy Spirit. There are still many people even today in whom we perceive that they have the Holy Spirit both because of their doctrine and life. It is also given to us by God’s grace that we can explain the Scriptures and come to the knowledge of Christ, which is impossible without the Holy Spirit [1 Corinthians 12:3]. But if God did not accept the Baptism of infants, He would not give the Holy Spirit nor any of His gifts to any of them. In short, during the long time up to this day, no person on earth could have been a Christian. Now, God confirms Baptism by the gifts of His Holy Spirit, as is plainly seen in some of the Church Fathers, like St. Bernard, Gerson, John Hus, and others. These people were baptized in infancy, and since the holy Christian Church cannot perish until the end of the world, the sects must ac-

knowledge that such infant Baptism is pleasing to God. For God can never be opposed to Himself or support falsehood and wickedness, or for its promotion impart His grace and Spirit. This is indeed the best and strongest proof for the simpleminded and unlearned. For the sects shall not take from us or overthrow this article: “I believe in ... the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.”