

# THE BOOKS OF HOMILIES: Book 2—XVI. An Homily concerning the coming down of the holy Ghost

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[ 0 : 00 ] An homily concerning the coming down of the Holy Ghost, and the manifold gifts of the same, for Whitsunday. Before we come to the declaration of the great and manifold gifts of the Holy Ghost, wherewith the Church of God hath been evermore replenished, it shall first be needful briefly to expound unto you whereof this Feast of Pentecost, or Whitsuntide, had his first beginning.

You shall therefore understand that the Feast of Pentecost was always kept the fiftieth day after Easter, a great and solemn feast among the Jews, wherein they did celebrate the memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt, and also the memorial of the publishing of the law, which was given unto them in the Mount Sinai upon that day.

It was first ordained and commanded to be kept holy, not by any mortal man, but by the mouth of the Lord himself, as we read in Leviticus chapter 23 and Deuteronomy chapter 16.

The place appointed for the observation thereof was Jerusalem, where was great recourse of people from all parts of the world, as may well appear in the second chapter of the Acts, wherein mention is made of Parthians, Medes, Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, inhabitants of Jewry, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, and diverse other such places, whereby we may also partly gather what great and royal solemnity was commonly used in that feast.

Now, as this was given in commandment to the Jews in the old law, so did our Saviour Christ, as it were, confirm the same in the time of the Gospel, ordaining after a sort a new Pentecost for his disciples, namely when he sent down the Holy Ghost visibly in form of cloven tongues like fire, and gave them power to speak in such sort, that everyone might hear them, and also understand them, in his own language.

[ 1 : 43 ] Which miracle that it might be had in perpetual remembrance, the Church hath thought good to solemnize and keep holy this day, commonly called Whitsunday. And here is to be noted, that as the law was given to the Jews in the Mount Sinai the fiftieth day after Easter, so was the preaching of the Gospel through the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, given to the Apostles in the Mount Sion the fiftieth day after Easter.

And hereof this feast hath his name, to be called Pentecost, even of the number of the days. For as St. Luke writeth in the Acts of the Apostles, When fifty days were come to an end, the disciples being all together with one accord in one place, the Holy Ghost came suddenly among them, and sat upon each of them, like as it had been cloven tongues of fire, which thing was undoubtedly done to teach the Apostles and all other men, that it is he which giveth eloquence and utterance in preaching the Gospel, that it is he which openeth the mouth to declare the mighty works of God, that it is he which engendereth the burning zeal toward God's Word, and giveth all men a tongue, yea, a fiery tongue, so that they may boldly and cheerfully profess the truth in the face of the whole world, as Issei was endued with this spirit.

The Lord, saith Issei, gave me a learned and skilful tongue, so that I might know to raise up them that have fallen with the Word. The prophet David crieth to have this gift, saying, Open thou my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

For our Saviour Christ also in the Gospel saith to his disciples, It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which is within you. All which testimonies of Holy Scripture do sufficiently declare that the mystery of the tongues betokeneth the preaching of the Gospel, and the open confession of the Christian faith, in all them that are possessed with the Holy Ghost, so that, if any man be a dumb Christian, not professing his faith openly, but cloaking and colouring himself for fear of danger in time to come, he giveth men occasion, justly and with good conscience, to doubt lest he have not the gift of the Holy Ghost within him, because he is tongue-tied and doth not speak.

Thus then have ye heard the first institution of this feast of Pentecost, or Whitsuntide, as well in the old law among the Jews, as also in the time of the Gospel among the Christians.

[ 3 : 58 ] Now let us consider what the Holy Ghost is, and how consequently he worketh his miraculous works towards mankind. The Holy Ghost is a spiritual and divine substance, the third person in the deity, distinct from the Father and the Son, and yet proceeding from them both.

Which thing to be true, both the creed of Athanasius beareth witness, and may be also easily proved by most plain testimonies of God's holy word. When Christ was baptised of John in the river Jordan, we read that the Holy Ghost came down in the form of a dove, and that the Father thundered from heaven, saying, This is my dear and well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Where note three diverse and distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which all notwithstanding are not three gods, but one God. Likewise, when Christ did first institute and ordain the sacrament of baptism, he sent his disciples into the whole world, willing them to baptise all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Also in another place he saith, I will pray unto my Father, and he shall give you another comforter, again when the comforter shall come, whom I will send from my Father, etc. These and such other places of the New Testament do so plainly and evidently confirm the distinction of the Holy Ghost from the other persons in the Trinity, that no man can possibly doubt thereof, unless he will blaspheme the everlasting truth of God's word.

As for his proper nature and substance, it is altogether one with God the Father and God the Son, that is to say, spiritual, eternal, uncreated, incomprehensible, almighty.

[ 5 : 33 ] To be short, he is even God and Lord everlasting. Therefore he is called Spirit of the Father, therefore he is said to proceed from the Father and the Son, and therefore he was equally joined with them in the commission that the apostles had to baptise all nations.

But that this may appear more sensibly to the eyes of all men, it shall be requisite to come to the other part, namely to the wonderful and heavenly works of the Holy Ghost, which plainly declare unto the world his mighty and divine power.

First, it is evident that he did wonderfully govern and direct the hearts of the patriarchs and prophets in old time, illuminating their minds with the knowledge of the true Messiahs, and giving them utterance to prophesy of things that should come to pass long time after.

For as St. Peter witnesser, The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but the holy men of God spake as they were moved inwardly by the Holy Ghost. And of Zachary the high priest it is said in the gospel, that he, being full of the Holy Ghost, prophesied and praised God.

So did also Simeon, Anna, Mary, and diverse other, to the great wonder and admiration of all men. Moreover was not the Holy Ghost a mighty worker in the conception and the nativity of Christ our Saviour?

[ 6 : 44 ] St. Matthew said that the Blessed Virgin was found with child of the Holy Ghost before Joseph and she came together. And the angel Gabriel did expressly tell her that it should come to pass, saying, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, a marvellous matter that a woman should conceive and bear a child without the knowledge of man.

But where the Holy Ghost worketh, there nothing is impossible, as may further also appear by the inward regeneration and sanctification of mankind. When Christ said to Nicodemus, Unless a man be born anew of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, he was greatly amazed in his mind, and began to reason with Christ, demanding how a man might be born which was old.

Can he enter, saith he, into his mother's womb again, and so be born anew? Behold a lively pattern of a fleshly and carnal man. He had little or no intelligence of the Holy Ghost, and therefore he goeth bluntly to work, and asketh how this thing were possible to be true.

Whereas, otherwise, if he had known the great power of the Holy Ghost in this behalf, that it is he which inwardly worketh the regeneration and new birth of mankind, he would never have marvelled at Christ's words, but would have rather taken occasion thereby to praise and glorify God.

For as there are three several and sundry persons in the deity, so have they three several and sundry offices proper unto each of them, the Father to create, the Son to redeem, the Holy Ghost to sanctify and regenerate.

[ 8 : 11 ] Whereof the last, the more it is hid from our understanding, the more it ought to move all men to wonder at the secret and mighty working of God's Holy Spirit, which is within us. For it is the Holy Ghost, and no other thing, that doth quicken the minds of men, stirring up good and godly motions in their hearts, which are agreeable to the will and commandment of God, such as otherwise of their own crooked and perverse nature, they should never have.

That which is born of the flesh, saith Christ, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. As who should say, man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naughty, sinful and disobedient to God, without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds.

As for the works of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions, if he have any at all in him, they proceed only of the Holy Ghost, who is the only worker of our sanctification, and maketh us new men in Christ Jesus.

Did not God's Holy Spirit miraculously work in the child David, when of a poor shepherd he became a prince-like prophet? Did not God's Holy Spirit miraculously work in Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom, when of a proud publican he became a humble and lowly evangelist?

And who can choose but marvel, to consider that Peter should become of a simple fisher, a chief and mighty apostle, Paul of a cruel and bloody persecutor, a faithful disciple of Christ to teach the Gentiles?

[ 9 : 38 ] Such is the power of the Holy Ghost to regenerate men, and as it were to bring them forth anew, so that they shall be nothing like the men that they were before. Neither doth he think it sufficient inwardly to work the spiritual and new birth of man, unless he do also dwell and abide in him.

Know ye not, saith St. Paul, that ye are the temple of God, and that his Spirit dwelleth in you? Know ye not, that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is within you? Again he saith, You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, for why the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

To this agreeeth the doctrine of St. John, writing on this wise, The anointing which ye have received, he meaneth the Holy Ghost, dwelleth in you. And the doctrine of Peter saith the same, who hath these words, The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.

O what a comfort is this to the heart of a true Christian, to think that the Holy Ghost dwelleth within him. If God be with us, as the Apostle saith, who can be against us?

O but how shall I know that the Holy Ghost is within me? Some man perchance will say. For sooth, as the tree is known by his fruit, so is also the Holy Ghost. The fruits of the Holy Ghost, according to the mind of St. Paul, are these, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Meekness, Temperancy, etc.

[ 10 : 56 ] Contrary-wise, the deeds of the flesh are these, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleaness, Wantonness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Debate, Emulation, Wrath, Contention, Sedition, Heresy, Envy, Murder, Drunkenness, Gluttony, and such like.

Here is now that glass wherein thou must behold thyself, and discern whether thou have the Holy Ghost within thee, or the Spirit of the flesh. If thou see that thy works be virtuous and good, consonant to the proscribed rule of God's word, savouring and tasting not of the flesh, but of the Spirit, then assure thyself that thou art endued with the Holy Ghost.

Otherwise, in thinking well of thyself, thou doest nothing else but deceive thyself. The Holy Ghost doth always declare himself by his fruitful and gracious gifts, namely by the word of wisdom, by the word of knowledge, which is the understanding of the Scriptures, by faith, in doing of miracles, by healing them that are diseased, by prophecy, which is the declaration of God's mysteries, by discerning of spirits, diversity of tongues, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.

All which gifts, as they proceed from one Spirit, and are severally given to man according to the measurable distribution of the Holy Ghost, even so do they bring men, and not without good cause, into a wonderful admiration of God's divine power.

Who will not marvel at that which is written in the Acts of the Apostles, to hear their bold confession before the council at Jerusalem, and to consider that they went away with joy and gladness, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer rebukes and checks for the name and faith of Christ Jesus?

[ 12 : 29 ] This was the mighty work of the Holy Ghost, who, because he giveth patience and joyfulness of heart in temptation and affliction, hath therefore worthily obtained this name in Holy Scripture, to be called a Comforter.

Who will not also marvel to read the learned and heavenly sermons of Peter and the other disciples, considering that they were never brought up in school of learning, but called even from their nets to supply rooms of apostles?

This was likewise the mighty work of the Holy Ghost, who, because he doth instruct the hearts of the simple in the true knowledge of God, and by his holy word is most justly termed by this name and title, to be the Spirit of Truth.

Eusebius, in his ecclesiastical history, telleth the strange story of a certain learned and subtle philosopher, who, being an extreme adversary to Christ and his doctrine, could by no kind of learning be converted to the faith, but was able to withstand all the arguments that could be brought against him, with little or no labour.

At length there started up a poor simple man, of small wit and less knowledge, one that was reputed among the learned as an idiot, and he on God's name would needs take in hand to dispute with this proud philosopher.

[ 13 : 36 ] The bishops and other learned men standing by were marvellously abashed in the matter, thinking that by his doings they should be all confounded and put to open shame. He notwithstanding goeth on, and beginning in the name of the Lord Jesus, brought the philosopher to such point in the end, contrary to all men's expectation, that he could not choose but acknowledge the power of God in his words, and to give place to the truth.

Was not this a miraculous work, that one seely soul of no learning should do that which many bishops of great knowledge and understanding were never able to bring to pass? So true is that saying of Bede, where the Holy Ghost doth instruct and teach, there is no delay at all in learning.

Much more might here be spoken of the manifold gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, most excellent and wonderful in our eyes, but to make a long discourse through all, the shortness of time will not serve.

And seeing ye have heard the chiefest, ye may easily conceive and judge of the rest. Now were it expedient to discuss this question, whether all they which boast and brag that they have the Holy Ghost, do truly challenge this unto themselves or no, which doubt, because it is necessary and profitable, shall God willing, be dissolved in the next part of this homily.

In the mean season, let us, as we are most bound, give hearty thanks to God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, for sending down this Comforter into the world, humbly beseeching him so to work in our hearts by the power of this Holy Spirit, that we, being regenerate and newly born again in all goodness, righteousness, sobriety and truth, may in the end be made partakers of everlasting life in his heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour.

[ 15 : 16 ] Amen. Our Saviour Christ, departing out of the world unto his Father, promised his disciples to send down another Comforter that should continue with them forever and direct them into all truth.

Which thing to be faithfully and truly performed the Scriptures do sufficiently bear witness? Neither must we think that this Comforter was either promised or else given only to the Apostles, but also to the universal Church of Christ, dispersed through the whole world.

For unless the Holy Ghost had been always present, governing and preserving the Church from the beginning, it could never have sustained so many and so great brunts of affliction and persecution, with so little damage and harm as it hath.

And the words of Christ are most plain in this behalf, saying that the Spirit of Truth should abide with them forever, that he would be with them always. He meaneth by grace, virtue and power, even to the world's end.

Also in the prayer that he made to his Father a little before his death, he maketh intercession, not only for himself and his Apostles, but indifferently for all them that should believe in him through their words, that is to wit, for his whole Church.

[ 16 : 24 ] Again St. Paul saith, If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is not his. Also in the words following, we have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Hereby then it is evident and plain to all men that the Holy Ghost was given, not only to the Apostles, but also to the whole body of Christ's congregation, although not in like form and majesty as he came down at the Feast of Pentecost.

But now herein standeth the controversy, whether all men do justly arrogate to themselves the Holy Ghost or no. The bishops of Rome have for a long time made a sore challenge thereunto, reasoning for themselves after this sort.

The Holy Ghost, say they, was promised to the Church, and never forsaketh the Church. But we are the chief heads and the principal part of the Church. Therefore we have the Holy Ghost forever, and whatsoever things we decree are undoubted verities and oracles of the Holy Ghost.

That ye may perceive the weakness of this argument, it is needful to teach you first what the true Church of Christ is, and then to confer the Church of Rome therewith to discern how well they agree together.

[ 17 : 30 ] The true Church is an universal congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head cornerstone, and it hath always three notes or marks, whereby it is known, pure and sound doctrine, the sacraments ministered according to Christ's holy institution, and the right use of ecclesiastical discipline.

This description of the Church is agreeable both to the scriptures of God and also to the doctrine of the ancient fathers, so that none may justly find fault therewith. Now if ye will compare this with the Church of Rome, not as it was at the beginning, but as it is presently, and hath been for the space of nine hundred years and odd, ye shall well perceive the state thereof to be so far wide from the nature of the true Church that nothing can be more.

For neither are they built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, retaining the pure and sound doctrine of Christ Jesus, neither yet do they order either the sacraments or else the ecclesiastical keys in such sort as he did first institute and ordain them, but have so intermingled their own traditions and inventions by chopping and changing, by adding and plucking away, that now they may seem to be converted into a new guise.

Christ commended to his Church a sacrament of his body and blood. They have changed it into a sacrifice for the quick and the dead. Christ did minister to his apostles and the apostles to other men, indifferently under both kinds.

They have robbed the laypeople of the cup, saying that for them one kind is sufficient. Christ ordained no other element to be used in baptism, but only water, whereunto, when the word is joined, it is made, as St. Augustine saith, a full and perfect sacrament.

[ 19 : 09 ] They, being wiser in their own conceit than Christ, think it is not well or orderly done, unless they use conjuration, unless they hallow the water, unless there be oil, salt, spittle, tapers and such other dumb ceremonies, serving to no use, contrary to the plain rule of St. Paul, who willeth all things to be done in the Church unto edification.

Christ ordained the authority of the keys to excommunicate notorious sinners, and to absolve them which are truly penitent. They abuse this power at their own pleasure, as well in cursing the godly with bell, book and candle, as also in absolving the reprobate, which are known to be unworthy of any Christian society, whereof he that lusts to see examples, let him search their lives.

To be short, look what our Saviour Christ pronounced of the scribes and the Pharisees in the Gospel, the same may we boldly and with safe conscience pronounce of the bishops of Rome, namely that they have forsaken and daily do forsake the commandments of God, to erect and set up their own constitutions.

Which thing being true, as all they which have any light of God's word must needs confess, we may well conclude, according to the rule of Augustine, that the bishops of Rome and their adherents are not the true church of Christ, much less then to be taken as chief heads and rulers of the same.

Whosoever, saith he, do dissent from the scriptures concerning the head, although they be found in all places where the church is appointed, yet are they not in the church, a plain place concluding directly against the church of Rome.

[ 20 : 37 ] Where is now the Holy Ghost, which they so stoutly do claim to themselves? Where is now the spirit of truth, that will not suffer them in any wise to err? If it is possible to be there where the true church is not, then is it at Rome.

Otherwise it is but a vain brag, and nothing else. St. Paul, as ye have heard before, saith, If any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is not his. And by turning the words, it may be as truly said, If any man be not of Christ, the same hath not his spirit.

Now to discern who are truly his, and who not, we have this rule given us, that his sheep do always hear his voice. And St. John saith, He that is of God, heareth God's word, whereof it followeth, that the popes, in not hearing Christ's voice, as they ought to do, but preferring their own decrees before the express word of God, do plainly argue to the world that they are not of Christ, nor yet possessed with his spirit.

But here they will allege for themselves, that there are diverse necessary points not expressed in Holy Scripture, which were left to the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who being given to the church, according to Christ's promise, hath taught many things from time to time, which the apostles could not then bear.

To this we may easily answer by the plain words of Christ, teaching us that the proper office of the Holy Ghost is not to institute and bring in new ordinances, contrary to his doctrine before taught, but to expound and declare those things which he had before taught, so that they might be well and truly understood.

[ 22 : 06 ] When the Holy Ghost, saith he, shall come, he shall lead you into all truth. What truth doth he mean? Any other than he himself had before expressed in his word? No, for he saith, he shall take of mine and show it unto you.

Again, he shall bring you in remembrance of all things that I have told you. It is not then the duty and part of any Christian, under pretense of the Holy Ghost, to bring in his own dreams and fantasies into the church, but he must diligently provide that his doctrine and decrees be agreeable to Christ's Holy Testament.

Otherwise, in making the Holy Ghost the author thereof, he doth blaspheme and belie the Holy Ghost to his own condemnation. Now to leave their doctrine and come to other points, what shall we judge or think of the Pope's intolerable pride?

The Scripture saith that God resisteth the proud and showeth grace to the humble. Also it pronounces them blessed, which are poor in spirit, promising that they which humble themselves shall be exalted.

And Christ our Saviour willet all his to learn of him, because he is humble and meek. As for pride, St. Gregory saith, it is the root of all mischief. And St. Augustine's judgment is this, that it maketh men devils.

[ 23 : 15 ] Can any man then, which either hath or shall read the Pope's lives, justly say that they had the Holy Ghost within them, first as touching that they will be termed universal bishops and heads of all Christian churches through the world, we have the judgment of Gregory expressly against them, who, writing to Mauritius the emperor, condemneth John Bishop of Constantinople in that behalf, calling him the Prince of Pride, Lucifer's successor, and the forerunner of Antichrist.

St. Bernard also agreeing thereunto saith, What greater pride can there be than that one man should prefer his own judgment before the whole congregation, as though he only had the Spirit of God?

And Chrysostom pronounceth a terrible sentence against them, affirming plainly that Whosoever seeketh to be chief in earth shall find confusion in heaven, and that he which striveth for the supremacy shall not be reputed among the servants of Christ.

Again he saith, To desire a good work it is good, but to covet the chief degree of honour it is mere vanity. Do not these places sufficiently convince their outrageous pride in usurping to themselves a superiority above all other, as well ministers and bishops, as kings also and emperors.

But as the lion is known by his claws, so let us learn to know these men by their deeds. What shall we say of him that made the noble king Dandelus to be tied by the neck with a chain, and to lie flat down before his table, there to gnaw bones like a dog?

[ 24 : 38 ] Shall we think that he had God's Holy Spirit within him, and not rather the spirit of the devil? Such a tyrant was Pope Clement VI. What shall we say of him that proudly and contemptuously trod Frederick the emperor under his feet, applying that verse of the psalm unto himself?

Thou shalt go upon the lion and the adder, the young lion and the dragon thou shalt tread under thy foot. Shall we say that he had God's Holy Spirit within him, and not rather the spirit of the devil? Such a tyrant was Pope Alexander III.

What shall we say of him that armed and animated the son against the father, causing him to be taken, and to be cruelly famished to death, contrary to the law both of God and also nature? Shall we say that he had God's Holy Spirit within him, and not rather the spirit of the devil?

Such a tyrant was Pope Pascal II. What shall we say of him that came into his popedom like a fox, that reigned like a lion, and died like a dog? Shall we say that he had God's Holy Spirit within him, and not rather the spirit of the devil?

Such a tyrant was Pope Boniface VIII. What shall we say of him that made Henry the emperor, with his wife and young child, to stand at the gates of the city in the rough winter, barefooted and barelegged, only clothed in Lindsay Woolsey, eating nothing from morning to night, and that for the space of three days?

[ 25 : 53 ] Shall we say that he had God's Holy Spirit within him, and not rather the spirit of the devil? Such a tyrant was Pope Hildebrand, most worthy to be called a firebrand, if we shall term him as he hath best deserved.

Many other examples might here be alleged, as of Pope Joan the harlot, that was delivered of a child in the high street, going solemnly in procession, of Pope Julius II, that willfully cast St. Peter's keys into the river Tivirus, of Pope Urban VI, that caused five cardinals to be put in sacks and cruelly drowned, of Pope Sergius III, that persecuted the dead body of Formosus, his predecessor, when it had been buried eight years, of Pope John the fourteenth of that name, who having his enemy delivered into his hands, caused him first to be stripped stark naked, his beard to be shaven, and to be hanged up a whole day by the hair, then to be set upon an ass with his face backwards towards the tail, to be carried round about the city in despite, to be miserably beaten with rods, last of all to be thrust out of his country, and to be banished for ever.

But to conclude and make an end, ye shall briefly take this short lesson, wheresoever ye find the spirit of arrogancy and pride, the spirit of envy, hatred, contention, cruelty, murder, extortion, witchcraft, necromancy, etc., assure yourselves that there is the spirit of the devil, and not of God, albeit they pretend outwardly to the world never so much holiness.

For as the gospel teacheth us, the spirit of Jesus is a good spirit, an holy spirit, a sweet spirit, a lowly spirit, a merciful spirit, full of charity and love, full of forgiveness and pity, not rendering evil for evil, extremity for extremity, but overcoming evil with good, and remitting all offence even from the heart.

According to which rule, if any man live uprightly, of him it may be safely pronounced, that he hath the Holy Ghost within him. If not, then it is a plain token that he doth usurp the name of the Holy Ghost in vain.

[ 27 : 48 ] Therefore, dearly beloved, according to the good counsel of St. John, believe not every spirit, but first try them whether they be of God or no. Many shall come in my name, saith Christ, and shall transform themselves into angels of light, deceiving, if it be possible, the very elect.

They shall come unto you in sheep's clothing, being inwardly cruel and ravening wolves. They shall have an outward show of great holiness and innocency of life, so that ye shall hardly or not at all discern them.



But the rule that ye must follow is this, to judge them by their fruits, which if they be wicked and naught, then is it impossible that the tree of whom they proceed should be good. Such were all the popes and prelates of Rome for the most part, as doth well appear in the story of their lives, and therefore they are worthily accounted among the number of false prophets and false Christs, which deceive the world a long while.

The Lord of heaven and earth defend us from their tyranny and pride, that they never enter into his vineyard again, to the disturbance of his seely poor flock, but that they may be utterly confounded and put to flight in all parts of the world.

And he of his great mercy so work in all men's hearts, by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, that the comfortable gospel of his Son Christ may be truly preached, truly received, and truly followed in all places, to the beating down of sin, death, the Pope, the devil, and all the kingdom of Antichrist, that the scattered and dispersed sheep, being at length gathered into one fold, we may in the end rest all together in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there to be partakers of eternal and everlasting life, through the merits and death of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

[ 29 : 26 ]    Amen.