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Chancellor's Update

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Jesus, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the God-Man, came to earth for the precise purpose of healing the breach that had occurred as a result of the most disastrous event in the history of mankind, namely, the original sin of Adam and Eve. So Jesus fulfilled the promise made in the Garden of Eden by opening the gates of heaven to as many men and women who would take advantage of the opportunity to live according to God's plan in order to achieve eternal happiness with God after their sojourn on earth.

Jesus had completed His mission, had resurrected from the dead, and was once again with His Apostles, but they were confused about why He was insisting on leaving them. *Sorrow has filled your heart. But I speak the truth to you; it is expedient for you that I depart. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He has come He will convict the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment: of sin because they do not believe in Me; of justice, because I go to the Father, and you will see Me no more; and of judgment, because the prince of this world has already been judged... When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will teach you all the truth.* (John 16, 6-11, 13)

Like the Apostles this generation needs a better understanding of *He will convict the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment*. Saint Cyril of Alexandria and other Church Fathers offered their explanations to state clearly their meaning.

Cyril wrote, "The reproach of sin is placed first. In what manner will He *convince the world*? When those who love Christ, that is, the just, are convinced *of sin*; that is, that He will condemn the world, which means the ignorant and the unbelieving who continue unbelieving, and those held fast by the delights of the world, because of this fact, that they are enslaved by their own vices, and must die because of their offences. For God shall not be a respecter of persons; and to some in this world He will grant His Spirit without just cause, to others He will not grant it at all; but He will have the Paraclete only in those who are worthy of Him, Who in perfect faith worship Him as truly God, confessing that He is the Creator and Lord of the universe. And so what Our Savior earlier told the Jews: *If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins* (John viii, 24), the Paraclete when He comes will show to be true because of their deeds."

Saint John Chrysostom asked, "What does He mean by, *He will convince the world of sin*? This means He will take away all their excuses, and make clear to them that they have been offending most unforgivably."

Saint Augustine wrote, "When He said: *He will convince the world of sin*, the sin is none other than that they have not believed in Christ. And so, should the soul be free of this sin, then no sins will remain upon it, because to the just man who lives in his faith all things are forgiven."

Saint Cyril observed, “*He will convince the world of justice: because I go to the Father; and you shall see me no longer.* For He shall, fittingly, give His wisdom to those who have believed in Christ after His Resurrection, as being, and rightly, justified. For they received Him as True God, though they had not seen Him, and believed that He is enthroned with the Father.”

“We must know that these two reproaches are meant, not for the Jews alone, but rather for every man who shall be stubborn and resistant to the Paraclete. For by the term *world* is meant not alone the man who is endlessly absorbed in seeking pleasure, and does not leave behind the devil’s wickedness, but all who are scattered throughout the whole world, and dwell there. So this double reproof is addressed to all men. For Christ has called to salvation not alone the Jews, the seed of Abraham, as in the beginning, but the whole fallen race of Adam. For His grace is without measure; and the gift of faith is offered to the whole world.”

Saint Cyril continued, “The third approach of the Holy Spirit shall be, as the Savior tells us, that most merited condemnation of the prince of this world. And how this will come to pass I shall explain. The Paraclete will testify to the glory of Christ, showing that He is indeed the Lord of the universe, and will show the world its error, in that abandoning Him Who is by nature God they have fallen down before and worshipped one who is not by nature God; that is, Satan. For the judgment against him suffices, I believe, to show that such is the case. For he could not have been condemned, and have forfeited his power, nor paid the penalty of his presumption against God, and been cast into the pit of darkness, if he were by nature God, Who sits Enthroned, serene in power and glory.”

“He will reprove the world as gone astray, resting its hopes in him who has been so condemned that he has lost all the glory of his former state, and is held as nothing by those who worship God. God then called him *the prince of this world*, not as being so in truth, or as though he possessed the dignity of a ruler inherent in him, but because he holds the glory of this world **by fraud and violence**, and because he still rules those in error, and because of **their own evil wills** he exercises authority over them by which, **their minds held fast in error**, they are themselves inevitably entangled in the bonds of slavery, though it is **in their power to escape**, by being converted through faith in Christ to the knowledge of the True God. Satan then is but a pretender to the name of prince, and has **no natural right to it**, and holds it only **because of the execrable wickedness of those who have gone astray.**”

“Therefore, when the Paraclete from heaven enters the soul of the Just, sent fittingly to them because of their faith, He will then convince the world that it is held fast in its own sins, and deprived of the grace of heaven because they turned from the Redeemer. And also He will reprove the world for falsely accusing of sin those who have believed. For they have indeed been justified; for though they did not behold God as He worked His miracles or as He ascended into heaven, yet they love and honor Him by faith.”

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