

I Corinthians 1; Lord's Day 25

FROM WHAT DOES FAITH PROCEED? THE HOLY SPIRIT

- I. His use of means.
 - A. As God's created world is worked in a uniform way, so the Holy Spirit works in a uniform way (Canons III,IV-17; V-14).
 - B. There are means or instruments the Spirit uses to give and strengthen the gift of faith.
- II. The Holy Spirit powerfully declares that He gives faith by the hearing of the word of God (Rom. 10:17).
 - A. To preach is to herald the good news of the gospel.
 1. The preacher must be "sent" (Rom. 10:15), which is done by the elders (Acts 13:1-3).
 2. Christ Himself speaks and is heard (John 5:24; 10:3,4,27; Rom. 10:14-17; Eph. 4:21; I Thess. 2:13).
 - B. The preaching of the Word a means of grace requires a specific, distinct kind of hearing.
 1. This is that kind of hearing which hears the One you believe to be able to save you and thus you call on Him (Rom. 10:13,14)
 2. This is the kind of hearing which sheep do toward their Shepherd resulting in their following Him (John 10:27).
- III. The Holy Spirit confirms faith by the sacraments.
 - A. The sacraments are signs, i.e., visible representations of invisible realities.
 - B. And they are seals, i.e., a pledge of the promise of the gospel, guaranteeing what is revealed in the sign.
 - C. How are they signs and seals? They have no power in themselves, but it is only by the Spirit working.
- IV. The clear implication is that we must use correctly the means God uses to give grace.
 - A. We are bound to use them if we want grace and an increasingly stronger conscious faith.
 - B. Pray for the preacher and preaching (I Thess. 5:25; Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:3; Heb 13:18).
 - C. "Receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the word of God; meditate, and confer of it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives." (Larger Catechism, q. 160).