

According to Jesus, the purpose and work of the Holy Spirit is to “teach” and “bring to remembrance” everything He taught His disciples regarding His suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. To be sure, this work will be accompanied by miracles as God sees fit. However, it is the proclamation of the Word of Christ by which men are saved and the Holy Spirit is known.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF CONCORD
THE DAY OF PENTECOST
FORMULA OF CONCORD, EPITOME
ARTICLES II: FREE WILL

Affirmative Theses.

The Pure Doctrine concerning This Article, according to God's Word.

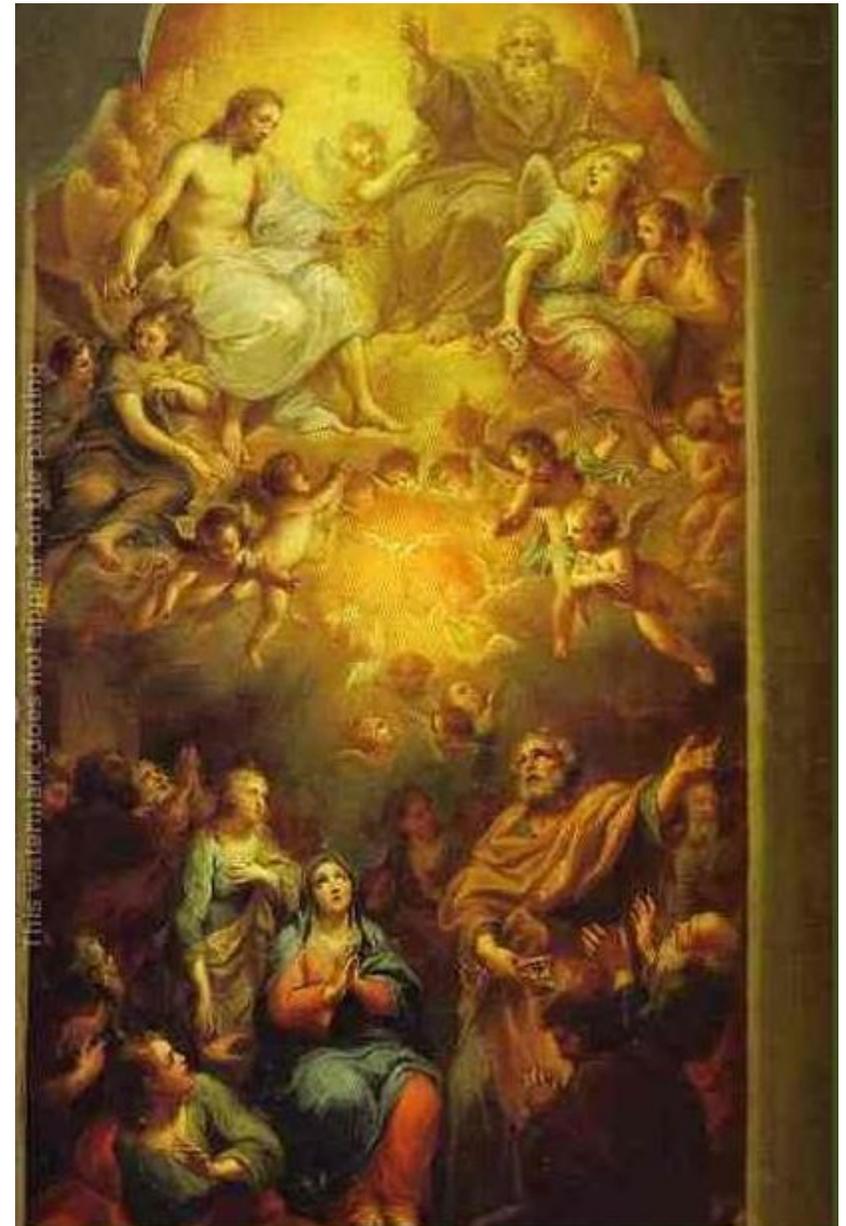
4] 3. God the Holy Ghost, however, does not effect conversion without means, but uses for this purpose the preaching and hearing of God's Word, as it is written Rom. 1:16: The Gospel is the power of God 5] unto salvation to every one that believeth. Also Rom. 10:17: Faith cometh by hearing of the Word of God. And it is God's will that His Word should be heard, and that man's ears should not be closed. Ps. 95:8. With this Word the Holy Ghost is present, and opens hearts, so that they, as Lydia in Acts 16:14, are attentive to it, and are thus converted alone through the grace and power of the Holy Ghost, whose 6] work alone the conversion of man is. For without His grace, and if He do not grant the increase, our willing and running, our planting, sowing, and watering, all are nothing, as Christ says John 15:5: Without Me ye can do nothing. With these brief words He denies to the free will its powers, and ascribes everything to God's grace, in order that no one may boast before God. 1 Cor. 1:29; 2 Cor. 12:5; Jer. 9:23.

Negative Theses.

Contrary False Doctrine.

13] 6. Also, we reject and condemn the error of the Enthusiasts, who imagine that God without means, without the hearing of God's Word, also without the use of the holy Sacraments, draws men to Himself, and enlightens, justifies, and saves them. (Enthusiasts we call those who expect the heavenly illumination of the Spirit [celestial revelations] without the preaching of God's Word.)

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"Pentecost"—oil on canvas ca. 765
by Anton Raphael Mengs