

Chapter 15

Some of those Jewes also that were Christians, doe fall and are authours of the Heresie of Iudaizing. 2. They referre the matter to Councel: 7. Wherein after great disputation, Peter striking the stroke, 12. and other confirming his sentence with miracles, 13. and with Scriptures: 22. the Apostles and Priests doe write and command in the name of the Holy Ghost what is to be done. 30. And the faithful thereby are straightwaies quieted in mind. 36. After which, Paul and Barnabas thinking to goe againe their aboutfaid circuit together, are by occasion of Marke parted, to the greater increase of the Church.

Gal. 5, 2.

them
πρεσβυτέρους

And certaine comming downe from Iewrie, taught the Brethren: That vnles you be circumcised according to the manner of Moyfes, you can not be faued. ² No litle sedition therfore being risen to Paul and Barnabas against them, they ¹appointed that Paul and Barnabas should goe vp, & certaine others of ‘the rest,’ to the Apostles and Priests vnto Hierufalem, vpon this question.

³ They therfore being brought on their way by the Church, passed through Phœnice & Samaria, reporting the conuerfion of the Gentiles: and they made great ioy to al the Brethren.

πρεσβυτέρων

⁴ And when they were come to Hierufalem, they were receiued of the Church and of the Apostles and ^a)Ancients, declaring whatfoeuer God had done with them. ⁵ And there arose certaine of the heresie of the Pharisees that beleued, faying, That they must be circumcised; cōmanded also to keepe the law of Moyfes. ⁶ And the ¹Apostles and Ancients ¹affembled to confider of this word.

^a Anciēts here, & often in this chapter are the same that Priestes *verf. 2.* as S. Hiero. taketh it also *1. Pet. 5.* & the greeke approueth, being alwaies one, πρεσβυτέροι, Priests *Hiero. in 1. ad Tit. & 4. ad Galat.*

7 And when there was made a ^{a)}great difputation,
Act. 10, 20. ¶Peter rifing vp faid to them: Men Brethren, you know
that of old daies God among vs ¶chofe, that by my
mouth the Gentils fhould heare the word of the Ghofpel,
and beleue. 8 And God which knoweth the hartes, gaue
Act. 10, 45. teftimonie, giuing vnto them the Holy Ghoft as wel as
to vs, 9 and hath put no difference between vs and them,
b)by faith purifying their hartes. 10 Now therefore why
tempt you God, to put a yoke vpon the necks of the
Disciples, which neither our Fathers nor we haue been
able to beare? 11 But by the grace of our Lord IESVS
CHRIST we beleue to be faued, in like manner as they
alfo.

12 And al the multitude held their peace: and they
heard Barnabas and Paul telling what great finnes and
wonders God had done among the Gentils by them.

13 And after they held their peace, ¶James answered,
faying: Men Brethren, heare me. 14 Simon hath told how
God firft vifited to take of the Gentils a people to his
name. 15 And to this accord the wordes of the Prophets,
Amos. 7, 11. as it is written: 16 *After thefe things I wil returne, and
wil reedifie the tabernacle of Dauid which was fallen, and
the ruines thereof I wil reedifie, and fet it vp: 17 that the
refidue of men may feeke after the Lord, and al Nations
vpon whom my name is inuocated, faith the Lord that
doth thefe things.*

17 To our Lord was his owne worke knowen from
the beginning of the world. 18 For the which caufe I
iudge, that they which of the Gentils are conuerted to
God, are not to be difquieted, 19 but to write vnto them
that they refraine themfelues from the contaminations of
Idols, and ¶fornication, and ftrangled things, and bloud.
20 For Moyfes of old times hath in euery citie them that
preach him in the Synagogues, where he is read euery
Sabboth.

^a See the *Annot. vers. 28. toward the end.*

^b By that faith which worketh by charitie. For a dead faith cā not
purifie the hart of mā. See *chap. 16, 31.*

²¹ Then it pleased the Apostles and Ancients with the whole Church, to choose men out of them, & to send to Antioche with Paul and Barnabas, Judas, who was surnamed Barsabas, & Silas, chiefe men among the Brethren, ²² ^a)writing by their hands.

The Apostles and Ancients, the Brethren, to the Brethren of the Gentils that are at Antioche and in Syria and Cilicia, greeting. ²³ Because we haue heard that certaine going forth from vs haue troubled you with wordes subuerting your soules, to whom we gaue no commandement: ²⁴ It hath pleased vs being gathered in one, to choose out men & to send them vnto you with our deereft Barnabas and Paul, ²⁵ men that haue giuen their liues for the name of our Lord IESVS CHRIST. ²⁶ We haue sent therefore Judas and Silas who themselues also wil in wordes report vnto you the same things. ²⁷ For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to vs, to lay no further burden vpon you then these necessarrie things: ²⁸ That you absteyne frō the things immolated to Idols, and bloud, and that which is strangled, and fornication, from the which things keeping your selues, you shal doe wel. Fare ye wel.

²⁹ They therefore being dismissed went downe to Antioche: and gathering the multitude, deliuered the epistle. ³⁰ Which when they had read, they reioyced vpon the consolation: ³¹ but Judas and Silas, themselues also being Prophets, with many wordes comforted the Brethren, and confirmed them. ³² And hauing spent some time there, they were with peace dismissed of the Brethren vnto them that had sent them. ³³ But it seemed good vnto Silas to remaine there: and Judas departed alone: ³⁴ and Paul and Barnabas taried at Antioche, teaching and euangelizing with many others the word of our Lord.

^a Other Latin copies and the greeke read thus *writing by their hands an epistle conteyning these things.*

³⁵ And after certaine daies, Paul faid to Barnabas,
Act. 13, 14. let vs returne and ^a)vifite our Brethren in al cities wherein
 we haue preached the word of our Lord, how they doe.
³⁶ And Barnabas would haue taken with them Iohn alfo
Act. 13, 13. that was furnamed Marke. ³⁷ But Paul defired that he
 (as who had departed from them out of Pamphylia, &
 had not gone with them to the worke) might not be re-
 ceiued. ³⁸ And there rofe a ^d)diffention, fo that they de-
 parted one from another, & that, Barnabas indeed tak-
 ing Marke failed to Cypres. ³⁹ But Paul choofing Silas
 departed, being deliuered of the Brethren to the grace
 of God.

⁴⁰ And he walked through Syria and Cilicia, con-
 firming the Churches ^b)commanding them to keepe the
 precepts of the Apoftles & the Ancients.

ANNOTATIONS

2 Appointed.) We learne by this example, what is to be
 done when any controuerfie arifeth in religion between the teach-
 ers or other Chriftian people. We fee it is not enough to contend
 by allegations of Scriptures or other proofes feeming to make for
 either part: for fo of contentious part-taking there should be no
 end, but the more writing, wreftling, ftriuing there were, euery
 one for his owne fanfie, cloking it with the title of Gods word
 and Scripture, the more Schifmes, Sectes, and diuifions would
 fal: as we fee fpecially in the reftles Hereties of our time. Whofe
 fautors admitting no iudges, ftand to no trial of mortal men, to
 no tribunal of Pope, Councels, Bishops, Synodes, but ech man to
 his owne phantaftical fpirit, his owne fenfe of Scriptures, and his
 owne wilful obdurate rebelliō againft Gods Church and his Super-
 iours in the fame. But here we fee S. Paul and Barnabas, men

The way to end
 diffention in reli-
 gion, is to commit
 it to a Councel.

^a Hereof our Catholike Bishops tooke vp the neceffarie vfe of oftē
 vifiting their flockes & cures cōmitted to their charge, for cōfir-
 mation in faith & vertue, & reformation of māners both of clergie
 and laitie.

^b Not only the things cōmanded by Chriftes exprefse word, or writtē
 in the Scriptures (as our Heretikes hold) but whatfoeuer the Apoftles
 and Rulers of the Church command, is to be kept & obeied. See
 thefe wordes repeated againe *c. 16, 4.* & that ī the greeke left any
 man cauil, becaufe here the greeke hath them not.

that were Apostles and full of the Spirit of God, & the other parties, though neuer so much partial to the ceremonies of their Law by their former long vse and education therein, yet not to stand stiffly to their owne opiniō on either side, but to condescend to referre the whole controuersie and the determination thereof to the Apostles, Priests or Ancients of Hierusalem, that is to say, to commit the matter to be tried by the Heads and Bishops, and their determination in Council. This is Gods holy and wise prouidence among other iudgements in his Church, to keepe the Christian people in truth & vnitie, and to condemne sectes, and false teachers and troublers of the Church. By which iudgements and order, whofoeuer wil not or dare not be tried in al their doctrine and doings, they shew themselues to mistrust their owne cause, and to flye from the light, & ordinance of God. Without which order of appealing al differences in faith and constructions of the Scriptures, the Church had beene more defectual and insufficient, then any Commonwealth or Societie of men in the world: none of which euer wanteth good meanes to decide al discordes and diffension arising among the subiects & citizens of the same.

6 Apostles and Ancients.) The Heresies of our Protestants which would haue al men to giue voice, or to be present in Councils, and of others that would haue none but the holy or elect to be admitted, are refuted by this example, where we see none but Apostles & Priests or Ancients assembled to dispute of the matter though many deuout people were in the citie the same time.

Of what persons a Council consisteth.

Neither did euer any other in the Ancient Councils of the Church assemble to debate and define the matter, but such, though many other for other causes be euer present. Secular men or women, be their gifts neuer so great, can not be iudges in causes of faith and religion. *If any thing, saith God, be hard and doubtful, thou shalt come to the Priests of the Leuitical stocke, and thou shalt follow their sentence.* Againe, *The lippes of the Priest shall keepe knowledge, and the Law thou shalt require of his mouth.*

Deut. 17.

Mal. 2, 7.

Agga. 2, 12.

Luc. 10, 16.

Againe, *Aske the Law of the Priest.* Much more must we referre al to our Bishops and Pastours, whom God hath placed in the regiment of the Church with much larger priuiledge, then euer he did the old Priests ouer the Synagogue: to whom it is said, *He that despiseth you despiseth me.* And it is to be noted that the Bishops so gathered in Council, represent the whole Church, haue the authoritie of the whole Church, & the Spirit of God to protect them frō error, as the whole Church: SS. Paul and Barnabas come hither for the definition of the whole Church. *The sentence of a plenarie or general Council (saith S. Augustine) is the consent of the whole Church.* And so it must needs be in the Church, because the Magistrates, Senate, Couñcel or deputies of al commonwealthes, represent the whole body: and to haue it otherwise (as the Churches Rebels wish) were to bring al to hel and horreur, and themselues to be perpetually, by the seditious and

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li. 1. c. 18. de bapt.

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popular persons upholden against Law, reason, and religion, in their wickednes.

6 Affembled.) A Council was called to discuss the matter which Council was the more easily gathered, because the Christian Bishops and countries were not yet so many but that the principal Governours of the Church being not farre dispersed, and as many learned men as were necessarie, might be in Hierusalem or easily called thither. And it was not a Prouincial Council or Synode only, but a general Council, consisting of the cheefe Apostles & Bishops that then were, though the number was nothing so great as afterward used to assemble, when the Church was spread into all Nations.

The first Council at Hierusalem.

7 Peter rising vp.) S. Peter as the Head of the Church speaketh first, as his Successors haue euer had, not only in their personal presence, but in their absence by their Legates and Substitutes, the cheefe voice in all Councils general, none euer received into authority & credite in the Church without their Confirmation. And therefore the Councils of the Arians and of other Heretikes, were they neuer so great, wanting the Popes assent, assistance, or confirmation, did shamefully erre, as Ariminense for the Arians, and Ephesinum secundum for the Nestorians, & such like condemned Assemblies.

Peter Head of the Council, & his Successors after him.

7 Chose that by my mouth.) Though Paul were called and appointed specially to be the Apostle of the Gentils, yet that was S. Peters special privilege by Gods owne choice, that the first Gentils should be called by his mouth, and that he first should utter to the Church that truth of the admittance of the Gentils himself, for that he was Christs Vicar, being notwithstanding (as his Maister was) *Minister Circumcisionis*, that is, Apostle of the Iewes; Christ deferring all preeminence vnto him in that point also.

Peters preeminence both toward Iewes & Gentils.

Ro. 15, 8.
Gal. 1, 7.

13 James.) S. James because he was an Apostle and also Bishop of Hierusalem, gaue his sentence next. For the speech interposed of SS. Paul & Barnabas, was but for their better information in the decision of the matter, & for confirmation of S. Peters sentence: though they being Apostles, & Bishops, had voices in the council also; as many more had, though their sentences be not here reported. And where S. James in his speech saith, *I iudge*, it is not meant that he gaue the principal definitive sentence: for he (as all the rest) followed and allowed the sentence of S. Peter, as it is plaine in the text, the whole assembly for reuerence of his person & approbation of his sentence, holding their peace. *All the multitude* (saith S. Hierom) *held their peace, and into his sentence James the Apostle & all the Priests did passe together*. For though S. James did particularise certaine points incident to the question debated, as of eating strangled meates &c. yet the proper controuersie for which the Council assembled, was, Whether the Gentils conuerted were bound to obserue the Law of Moyses: & it was concluded that they were not bound, nor ought to be charged with Moyses

S. James and the rest follow S. Peters sentence.

Hier. to. 2.
ep. 89. ad
Aug. c. 2.

The principal question.

Law or the Sacraments & ceremonies of the same. This is the substance and principal purpose of this Councils decree, which doth bind for ever; and *Peter* (saith S. Hierom *in the same place*) was *Prince* or *Author of this decree* the matter of fornication & Idolothytes being but incident to the question, or resolution; & the forbidding of eating strangled & blood, but a temporal prohibition, which by the consent of the Church or otherwise afterward was abrogated; the Church of God having the true sense of difference of times, places, & persons, when and how farre such things are to be observed, and when not. And in such things as these, and in other like which according to circumstances require alteration, it is, that S. Augustine saith, *li. 2. de Bapt. c. 1. to. 7. The former general or plenarie Councils may be amended by the later.*

Incident questions.

How later Councils alter the former.

19 Fornication.) Fornication and contamination with Idols, are of themselves mortal finnes, and therefore can neuer be lawful: yet because the Gentils by custome were prone to both, and of fornication made very small account, it pleased the Holy Ghost to forbid both specially. Concerning the other points of abstaining from blood & stifled meates, they were things of their owne nature indifferent, in which for a time the Iewes were to be borne withal, and the Gentils to be a little exercised to obedience. By which we may see the great authoritie of Gods Church and Councils, which may command for ever, or for a time, such things as be fit for the state of times and Nations, without any expresse Scriptures at all, and so by commandment make things necessarie that were before indifferent.

The Churches authoritie in making Decrees.

23 Going forth from vs.) A proper description or note of Heretikes, Schismatikes, and seditious Teachers to goe out from their spiritual Pastours and Governours, & to teach without their commission and approbation, to disquiet the Catholike people with multitude of wordes and sweet speeches, and finally to overthrow their foules.

Going out a mark of heretikes.

27 To the Holy Ghost and to vs.) By this first we note, that it is not such a fault as the Heretikes would make it in the sight of the simple, or any incongruities at all, to ioyne God and his creatures, as the principal cause and the secondarie, in one speech, & to attribute that to both, which though diuerfly, yet proceedeth of both. *God and you*, say good people commonly: *God and our Ladie*, *Christ and S. Iohn*: *We confesse to God & to Peter & Paul*, as *God & his Angel*, *To our Lord & Gideon*, *The sword of our Lord & of Gideon*, *Our Lord and Moyfes*, *Christ and his Angels*, *Our Lord and all Saints.* *ep. ad Philem. S. Paul and our Lord. 2. Thef. 1, 6.* All these speeches being partly Scriptures, partly like vnto the Scriptures speeches, are warranted also by this Council, which saith boldly, & hath giuen the forme thereof to all other Councils lawfully called and confirmed, to say the like: *It hath pleased the Holy Ghost and vs. S. Cyprian ep. 54. nu. 2.*

God & our Ladie, and the like speeches.

Visum est spiritui sancto et nobis.

Gen. 48, 15, 16.
Iud. 7, 18, 20.
Exo. 14, 31.
1. Tim. 5, 21.

reporting the like of a Synode holden in Afrike, faith: *It hath pleased vs by the fuggelion of the Holy Ghoft.*

Secondly we note, that the holy Councils lawfully kept for determination or cleering of doubts, or condemning of errors & Herefies, or appeafing of Schifmes & troubles, or reformation of life, and fuch like important matters, haue euer the afsiftance of Gods Spirit, & therfore can not erre in their Sentences & determinations concerning the fame, becaufe the Holy Ghoft can not erre, from whom (as you fee here) ioynedly with the Council the refolution proceedeth.

Io. 16, 13.

Thirdly we learne, that in the Holy Councils fpecially (though otherwife & in other Tribunals of the Church it be alfo verified) Chriftes promife is fulfilled, that the Holy Ghoft fhould fuggelt them and teach them al truth, & that not in the Apoftles time only, but to the worldes end. For fo long fhall Councils, the Church, & her Pafours haue this priuiledge of Gods afsiftance, as there be either doubts to refolue, or Heretikes to condemne, or truths to be opened, or euil men to be reformed, or Schifmes to be appeafed. For which caufe S. Gregorie *li. 1. ep. 24. fub fin.* reuerenceth the foure general Councils (Nicen. Conftantinop. Ephes. Chalced.) as the foure books of the holy Ghofpel, alluding to the number: and of the fifth alfo he faith that he doth reuerence it alike: and fo would he haue done moe, if they had been before his time, who faith of them thus: *Whiles they are concluded and made by vniuerfal confent, himfelf doth he deftroy, and not them, whofoeuer prefumeth either to loofe whom they bind, or to bind whom they loofe.*

S. Gregorie therfore reuerencing al fiue alike, it may be marueled whence the Heretikes haue their fond difference betwixt thofe foure firft and other later: attributing much to them, and nothing to the reft. Whereas indeed the later can erre no more then the firft foure, being holden & approued as they were, and hauing the Holy Ghoft as they had. But in thofe firft alfo when a man findeth any thing againft their Herefies (as there be diuers things) then they fay plainly that they alfo may erre, and that the Holy Ghoft is not tied to mens voices, nor to the number of fentences. Which is directly to reprove this firft Council alfo of the Apoftles, and Chriftes promife of the Holy Ghofts afsiftance to teach al truth. Yea that you may know and abhorre thefe Heretikes throughly, heare ye what a principal Sect Maifter with his blaſphemous mouth or penne vttereth, faying, that *in the very beft times fuch was partly the ambition of Bifhops, partly their foolifhnes and ignorance, that the very blind may eaſily perceiue, Satan verily to haue been prefident of their affemblies.* Good Lord deliuer the people and the world from fuch blaſphemous tongues and bookes, and giue men grace to attend to the holy Scriptures and Doctours that they may fee how much, not only S. Auguftine and other Fathers attribute to al general

Beza in Præf. Teft. No. an. 1565.

The Holy Ghoft's Afsiftance in al lawful Councils, to the worlds end, and that by Chrifts promife.

S. Gregories reuerence of General Councils.

The Proteftants fond diftinctiō between the 4. firft & the later Councils.

Beza's blaſphemie againft the firft general Councils.

What the Fathers attribute to Councils, & namely S. Auguftine.

Councils specially, to which they referre themselves in all doubts among themselves and in all their controversies with Heretikes: but to which euen S. Paul himself (so specially taught by God) and others also yealded themselves. Notorious is the saying of S. Augustine concerning S. Cyprian, who being a Blessed Catholike Bishop and Martyr, yet erred about the rebaptizing of such as were Chriftned by Heretikes. *If he had liued faith S. Augustine li. 2. de bapt. c. 4. to haue seen the determination of a plenary Council, which he saw not in his life time, he would for his great humilitie and charitie straight way haue yealded, and preferred the general Council before his owne iudgement and his fellow Bishops in a Prouincial Council only.* Whereby also we learne, that Prouincial Councils may erre, though many times they doe not, and being conformable to the general Councils, or confirmed and allowed by them or the See Apostolike, their resolutions be infallible as the others are.

Prouincial
Councils.

If any here aske, what need so much disputing, study, and travail in Councils to find out and determine the truth, if the Holy Ghost infallibly guide them? We answer that such is the ordinarie providence of God in this case, to sift them when they doe their endeavour, and vse all humane means of industrie, and not els. And so (though somewhat otherwise) God sifted the Euangelists & other Writers of the holy Scriptures, that they could not erre in penning the same; but yet they did and ought to vse all possible humane diligence to know and learne out the histories and truth of matters, as is plaine in the beginning of S. Lukes Gospel: els the Holy Ghost would not haue sifted them. Euen so in this Council of the Apostles, though they had the Holy Ghost Assistant, yet the text saith, *cum magna conquisitio fieret*, when there was great disputation, search and examination of the case, then Peter spake &c. If againe it be demanded, what need is there to expect the Councils determination, if the Popes or See Apostolikes iudgement be infallible and haue the assistance of God also, as the Catholikes affirme? We answer, that for the Catholike and peaceable obedient children of the Church it is a comfort to haue such various means of determination, trial, and declaration of the truth; and that it is necessarie for the recovery of Heretikes, and for the contentation of the weake, who not alwaies giuing ouer to one mans determination, yet wil either yeald to the iudgement of all the learned men & Bishops of all Nations, or els remaine desperate and condemned before God and man for euer. And as I said before, this assistance of the Holy Ghost promised to Peters See, presupposeth humane means of searching out the truth, which the Pope alwaies hath vsed, & wil, & must vse in matters of great importance, by calling Councils: euen as here you see SS. Peter & Paul themselves and all the Apostles, though indowed with the Holy Ghost, yet thought it notwithstanding necessarie for further trial & clearing of truth and maintenance of vnitie, to keepe a Council.

Notwithstanding
the Holy Ghosts
assistance, yet hu-
mane means must
be vsed to search
the truth.

Lu. 1, 2.

Though the See
Apostolike itself
haue the same
assistance, yet
Councils also
necessarie for many
causes.

Laftly it is to be noted, that as Chrifft and the Holy Ghoft be prefent by his promife, to al fuch affemblies as gather in the obedience & vnitie of the Church, with ful mind to obey whatfoeuer fhall be determined, whereby the affembled though of diuers iudgements before, doe moft peaceable yeald to truth, and agree in one vniforme determination of the fame: fo al fuch as gather out of the Church, without humilitie or intention to yeald one to another, or to any Superiour, man or Council, or what els foeuer, but challenge to themfelues learning, fpirit, & we can not tel what; fuch, how many meetings foeuer they make, being deftitute of the Holy Ghoft the Authour of truth and concord, are further off & further out, then euer before: as God hath shewed by the fucceffe of al Heretical Colloquies, Synodes, and Affemblies in Germanie, France, Poole, and other places in our daies. Read a notable place in Saint Cyprian, that the promife of Chrifft, that he would be in the middes of two or three gathered in his name, pertaineth not to them that affemble out of the Church.

Heretical or Schifmatical affemblies.

de vnit. Ec. nu. 7.

30 Reioyced vpon the confolation.) Straight vpon the intelligence of the Councils determination, not only the Gentils, but euen the Maifters of the former troubles and diffenfion, were at reft; & al tooke great comfort that the controuerfie was fo ended. And fo fhould al Chrifftian men doe, when they fee the Sectes of our time condemned by the like authoritie and moft graue iudgement of the holy Council of Trent. Againft which the Heretikes of our time make the like friuolous exceptions and falfe cauillations, as did the old Heretikes heretofore againft thofe Councils that fpecially condemned their errors. The Pope and Bishops (fay they) are a partie, and they ought not to be our iudges: they are partial and come with preindicate mindes to condemne vs; and we accufe them al of Idolatrie and other crimes, and we wil be tried by Gods word only, and we wil expound it according to another rule, that is to fay, as we lift. So they againft this Council, and the like laid the Arians againft the firft Nicene Council, and al fuch like againft thofe Councils namely that condemned their herefies. And fo fay al theeues againft their correctours and punishers, & would both fay and doe more againft temporal tribunals, Iudges, Iuftices, and iuries, if they had as much licence and libertie in thofe matters, as men haue now in religion.

Al good Chrifftians reft vpon the determination of a general Council.

Al Heretikes make exceptiō againft the Councils that condemne them.

38 Diffenfion.) Such occafion of differences fal out euen among the perfect men often, without any great offence. And this their departing fel out to the great increafe of Chrifftians. And therefore it is very ridiculoufly applied to excufe the difagreeing of the Heretikes among themfelues in the principal pointes of religion, namely the Sacrament.