

THE TENTH ARTICLE.

'The Forgiveness of Sins.'

1. What does the Tenth Article of the Creed teach us?

That in the Catholic Church we can receive, through the merits of Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins and of the punishment due to them.

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace' (Eph. i. 3, 7).

2. What sins can be forgiven in the Catholic Church?

All sins without exception.

3. What must the sinner do in order to obtain forgiveness of his sins?

1. He must truly repent; for Christ says, 'Unless you shall do penance, you shall all perish' (Luke xiii. 3); and 2. He must worthily receive the Sacraments instituted by Christ for the remission of sins.

4. Which Sacraments were instituted by Christ for the remission of sins?

The Sacraments of Baptism and Penance.

5. Who has power to forgive sins in the Sacrament of Penance?

The Bishops of the Catholic Church and the Priests commissioned by them; for it was to them only that Christ said, 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them' (John xx. 23).

Application. Give hearty thanks to God for having promised you forgiveness of your sins, and go willingly and frequently to confession; but first prepare yourself well for it, that it may be said to you also, 'Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee' (Matt. ix. 2).

THE ELEVENTH ARTICLE.

'The Resurrection of the Body.'

1. What happens to man at his death?

The soul separates from the body, and appears before the judgment-seat of God; but the body returns into the earth (Eccles. xii. 7).

2. Why must all men die?

Because all have sinned in Adam.

'By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death' (Rom. v. 12).

3. Why has God hidden from us the time of our death?

1. That we may so much the more honor and fear Him as the Supreme Lord of life and death; 2. That we may keep ourselves every moment prepared for death; and 3. That the dread with which we are seized when we think of our imminent dissolution may be moderated.

'Be you then also ready; for at what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come' (Luke xii. 40). Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. xxv.)

4. How are we to keep ourselves prepared for death?

We should carefully avoid sin, and lead a godly life.

5. How long will the body remain in the earth?

The body will remain in the earth till the day of judgment, when God will raise it again to life, and reunite it for ever to the soul, from which death had separated it.

'The hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment'—i.e., to hear the sentence of condemnation (John v. 28, 29).

6. What do we call this raising of the bodies to life?

The resurrection of the flesh or body.

7. But how can the bodies, when reduced to dust, rise again ?

By the Omnipotence of God, our bodies, reduced to dust, can as easily be raised again to life as they were once made out of nothing.

Parable of the grain of wheat (1 Cor. xv. 35, etc.)

8. Why shall our bodies rise again ?

1. That, as the body was a partner with the soul in the performance of good or evil works, so it may also be a partaker of the reward or punishment (2 Cor. v. 10) ; and 2. That the victory of Christ over death may be perfect.

'When this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory ; O death, where is thy victory ?"' (1 Cor. xv. 54, 55.)

9. Shall all men rise from the dead ?

Yes, all men, the good as well as the wicked (John v. 28, 29).

10. Will the bodies, when raised to life, be all alike ?

No ; the bodies of the bad shall be hideous and miserable, but those of the good shall be glorious, and like to the glorified Body of Christ.

'We shall all indeed rise again, but we shall not all be changed'—*i.e.*, glorified (1 Cor. xv. 51) 'Our Lord Jesus Christ will reform the body of our lowliness, that it may be made like to the body of His glory' (Phil. iii. 21). Hence the honor we pay to the bodies of the deceased, (Funerals ; blessed Burying-grounds).

According to 1 Cor. xv. 42-44, we distinguish four qualities of the glorified bodies : 1. 'It [the body] is sown [*i.e.*, buried] in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption,' *incorruptible* and *impassible*—*i.e.*, incapable of corruption, and of any suffering. 2. 'It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory,' *bright*—*i.e.*, shining with glory, without spot or blemish. 3. 'It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power,' *agile*—*i.e.*, capable of transporting itself with the soul in an instant from one place to another. 4. 'It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body,' *subtile*—*i.e.*, spiritualized, or capable of penetrating any

corporeal substance, like our Saviour's Body after His Resurrection.

11. What impression should our belief in the resurrection of the body make upon us ?

It should incite us, 1. To honor our body, and never to abuse it by sinning ; 2. Patiently to suffer all bodily pains, and even death ; and 3. To console ourselves at the death of our friends.

1. 'Glorify and bear God in your body' (1 Cor. vi. 20). 2. Examples : Job xix. 25-27. 'In the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God. This my hope is laid up in my bosom' The Machabean Brothers, 2 Mach. vii. 9-14. 3. 'We will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you may not be sorrowful, even as others who have no hope,' etc. (1 Thess. iv. 12-17).

Application. Never abuse your eyes, tongue, ears, hands, nor your other senses or members by doing evil, but 'yield them to serve justice, unto sanctification' (Rom. vi. 19) ; that you may one day rise to everlasting glory, and not to everlasting damnation.

THE TWELFTH ARTICLE.

'And life everlasting. Amen.' —

1. What does the Twelfth Article of the Creed teach us ?

1. That after this life there is another, which will last for ever ; and 2. That the just shall enjoy eternal happiness in it.

'The just shall go into life everlasting'—that is, into eternal glory (Matt. xxv. 46.)

2. In what does the eternal happiness of the just consist ?

1. They see God as He is, and are united with Him in the most intense love ; and 2. With this sight and love of God is combined the possession of all good things, eternal joy and glory in the company of all the Angels and Saints.

1. 'We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face' (1 Cor. xiii. 12; comp. 1 John iii. 2). 2. 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow' (Apoc. xxi. 4). 'They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house [O God!], and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure' (Ps. xxxv. 9). 'They shall receive a kingdom of glory, and a crown of beauty at the hand of the Lord' (Wisd. v. 17).

3. Can we conceive this eternal happiness?

No; the happiness in Heaven is so great that it exceeds all that can be said or imagined.

For 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him' (1 Cor. ii. 9).

4. Will all be equally happy?

No; for 'every one shall receive his own reward according to his own labor'—*i.e.*, according to his deserts (1 Cor. iii. 8).

'He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings' (2 Cor. ix. 6; comp. 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42).

5. What will be the life of the wicked through all eternity?

A life without any grace or joy, a life full of pains in hell.

Such a life is called in the Holy Scripture the *second* (eternal) death. 'The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the *second* death' (Apoc. xxi. 8).

6. What is hell in the words of Christ?

'A place of torments' (Luke xvi. 28); 'an everlasting punishment' (Matt. xxv. 46); an 'unquenchable fire' (Mark ix. 44): 'the exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matt. viii. 12).

7. Who shall be condemned to the torments of hell?

Every one who dies an enemy of God—that is, who dies in mortal sin.

'He that committeth sin is of the devil' (1 John iii. 8); therefore, he also deserves to be punished like the devil. (Comp. Matt. xxix. 41).

8. What sort of pains shall the souls of the damned suffer?

1. Internal torture and despair at the thought of all the evil they have done, and of the many graces they have abused (Wisd. v. 1–15; Matt. viii. 12); 2. Unspeakable sadness and misery, because they have, by their own fault, forfeited eternal happiness in Heaven (Luke xiii. 25–28); 3. Perpetual horror of the dismal company of the devils and of all the damned (Matt. xxv. 41); and 4. The most intolerable torments and pangs, without any hope of relief or end; for their fire shall not be extinguished, and their worm shall not die (Mark ix. 45; Apoc. xx. 9, 10).

'And the rich man also died, and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom; and he cried, and said: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame,"' etc. (Luke xvi. 22–24).

9. Whence do we know that the pains of the damned are eternal?

1. From the clear testimony of Christ and the Apostles¹; and 2. From the express doctrine of the infallible Church, which has solemnly condemned the erroneous opinion of those heretics who taught that the pains of the devils and of the damned would in time have an end.

¹ 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire: . . . and they shall go into everlasting punishment' (Matt. xxv. 41 and 46). 'It is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting, than, having two feet, to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished' (Mark ix. 44, 45). 'And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever' (Apoc. xiv. 11, and elsewhere).

10. Why are the pains of the condemned souls eternal?

1. Because the offence against the *infinite* Majesty of God demands of His justice a punishment without end; 2. Because all who die in sin remain eternally obdurate in sin; 3. Because God, in virtue of His holiness, hates evil no less than He loves what is good, and therefore punishes vice eternally, as He eternally rewards virtue; and 4. Because only the everlasting pains of hell are a sufficient means to deter man, even in secret, from evil.²

¹ Sin remains as a propensity to sin, though it can no more be committed in deed (Innocent III.) ² God showed also mercy to us when He created hell, whereby He will prevent us from being wicked (St. John Chrysost.)

11. Will the pains of all the damned be equal?

No; for each one shall have to suffer in proportion to his sins, and to the ill use he has made of the graces bestowed upon him.

'As much as she' (the city of Babylon) 'hath glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her' (Apoc. xviii. 7). 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required' (Luke xii. 48).

12. Will all those who are condemned to eternal hell-fire be condemned by their own fault?

Yes; for all men may be eternally happy, provided they will avail themselves of the abundant graces which God gives them.

'God will have all men to be saved, for there is one mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a redemption for all' (1 Tim. ii 4-6). 'Before man is life and death; that which he shall choose shall be given him' (Ecclus. xv. 18).

13. What do you understand by the *Four Last Things* of man?

I understand by the four last things *Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven.*

14. Of what use is the frequent remembrance of the four last things to us?

It is, as the Holy Ghost testifies, an effectual means to avoid sin, and consequently to escape eternal damnation.

'In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin' (Ecclus. vii. 49).

15. With what word do we conclude the Apostles' Creed?

With the word '*Amen,*' which means 'So it is,' or 'So be it.'

16. Why do we conclude the Apostles' Creed with this word?

In order to declare that we firmly believe all that is contained in the twelve Articles of the Creed, and that we are determined to live according to this belief, and to die in it.

Application. Often consider, especially at the hour of temptation, this serious truth: 'Once lost, lost for ever'; or this one: 'Momentary joy brings on eternal pain, but short pain eternal joy'; and these words of Jesus Christ: 'The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away' (Matt. xi. 12).