

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

Art 12: I believe in the life everlasting.

Heaven.

1. These concluding words of the Creed, life everlasting, mean that after this life there will follow for us another life either of eternal happiness in heaven or of eternal misery in Hell.

2. It is certain that there will be another life after the present one, because God has revealed it to us, and because without such a life to follow the just would go unrewarded and the wicked escape the punishment they have deserved.

3. Heaven or paradise is a place of bliss where the angels and saints see God face to face and enjoy abounding happiness with Him through all eternity.

4. They alone go direct to heaven who die in a state of grace and who have to the full satisfied God's justice.

5. That the saints enjoy the sight of God in heaven we know from these words of Our Saviour: « Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. » (*Matt. v, 8.*)

6. The happiness enjoyed by the saints in heaven is beyond any thing we can conceive. Of it St. Paul tells us: « Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him. » (*I Cor. II, 9.*)

7. According to the Fathers the happiness of life everlasting life consists at one and the same time in freedom from every evil and in the possession of every blessing.

8. Regarding this freedom from every evil Holy Writ is clear and explicit: Thus in Apocalypse VI, 16, we read: *They (the blessed) shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them nor any heat.* And further on in chap. XXI, 4, we are told that *God shall wipe away all*

tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.

9. And as regards the possession of every blessing, boundless glory and every kind of joy and bliss will be theirs. Here on earth we can form no idea of them; they transcend the imagination.

10. Then only shall we know what they are when we shall have entered « into the joy of the Lord » (*Matt.* XXV, 21). Then shall we be, as it were, surrounded and submerged in a flowing tide of them, with every longing completely satisfied.

11. Although all the Saints see God in paradise, yet the extent of their bliss is in direct proportion to their merits.

12. For the present it is only their souls that are in heaven; their bodies, finally united to their souls, will not enter there until after the general resurrection.

13. The blessed will ceaselessly contemplate God face to face, and this privilege, the most glorious and precious of all, will render them participators in the divine nature and processors of the true and crowing beatitude, a beatitude that we must firmly believe in and confidently hope for from the goodness of God. The Nicene Creed makes us say: « I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. »

Explanation of the Plate.

14. Here we have a representation of heaven. *In the center of the picture* are the Three Persons of the Godhead seated within a triangle on a throne of glory and surrounded by angels, of whom some are sounding divers instruments, while others are swinging censers before the Throne. The Blessed Virgin, the Queen of Angels, sits at their head on the right of her Son on a throne lower than that of God, but raised above that of every other created being.

15. Coming next, but taking second rank, we see *on the right*, St. John the Baptist, Moses, David, Abraham and other saints of the Old Testament; and *on the left* St. Joseph, St. Peter with the other apostles,

an Evangelist holding in his hand a book, and several other saints of the New Testament.

16. Lowest of all and taking third rank, we observe the other saints, among whom are the martyrs, like St. Stephen, holy pontiffs, a king, virgin martyrs, like St. Cecilia and St. Catherine, and holy women, like St. Mary Magdalen.

17. St. Stephen is shown holding a stone in his hand, as he was stoned to death.

18. St. Cecilia is represented holding a harp, as she sang God's praises to the accompaniment of musical instruments.

19. At the feet of St. Catherine we see a broken wheel. It had been intended to tear her to pieces on a wheel armed with shard blades; but the wheel broke the moment set in motion.

20. St Mary Magdalen in her hand a vase, since she once poured over the head of Our Lord a vase full of a precious perfume.
