

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Art 12 (concl.): I believe in the life everlasting.

Hell.

1. Hell is a place of torment where the damned are excluded from the sight of God and burn with the demons in unquenchable fire.

2. Those go to hell who die in mortal sin.

3. There can be no doubt at all that the sufferings of the damned will never cease, for Christ Himself has said that at the last judgment, the wicked will be condemned to burn in everlasting fire. (*Matt.* xxv, 41). And again (*Mark* ix, 43, 45, 47) He repeated no less than three times that the « *worm* (which devours them) *dieth not, and the fire* (in which they burn) *is not extinguished* ».

4. God has made their sufferings thus terrible, because He, whose justice is *infinite*, is the Judge.

5. Although all the damned will be equally deprived of the sight of God, yet the extent of their sufferings will vary with the number and gravity of their sins.

6. Knowing and believing all this, what stronger motive could we have for repressing our evil passions and flying all occasions of sin. In Ecclesiasticus vii, 40, we are given this wholesome advice: « In all thy works remember thy last end and thou shall not sin. »

7. The temptation to commit sin must indeed exercise an extraordinary fascination over us if we cannot be drawn to the love and practice of virtue by the mere thought that we shall one day have to appear before the Universal Judge, who is justice itself, there to render to Him an account not only of all our words and actions, but even of our most secret thoughts, and receive the punishment we have merited.

Explanation of the Plate.

8. The picture gives but a very faint idea of the pains of hell. At the top are depicted seven open shafts descending into the pit of hell, each characterised by a capital letter, the letters being the initials of the seven capital sins, viz., Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Anger, and Sloth. The idea is to impress upon the imagination the fact that it is these sins which take most men to hell.

9. Above each initial letter is the figure of an animal symbolic of the sin in question. Thus the peacock represents Pride, the toad Covetousness, the he-goat Lust, the serpent Envy, the pig Gluttony, the lion Anger, and the tortoise Sloth.

10. A perpetual devouring flame is the common punishment of all the damned; each of whom however suffers in addition certain other punishments special to his sin.

11. Below the letter P we see the *proud* being dragged before Lucifer and forced down upon their knees before him, because during life they would not humble themselves before the Almighty.

12. Below the letter C we see the *covetous* with a bag suspended round their necks to remind them how intensely foolish they were to have to have preferred the temporary goods of this world to the eternal possessions of Paradise.

13. Below L we see the *lustful* being mercilessly belaboured by devils or worried by savage beasts. Not that there any animals in hell, but the idea here is to give some conception of the savagery with which the devils torment the damned.

14. Below E we see huge reptiles holding the *envious* in their coils and gnawing and tearing at them.

15. Below G are seen *gluttons* and *drunkards*, cruelly devoured by hunger and thirst, being fed upon the gall of dragons and the poison of asps. For drink they are given the wine of divine wrath, while their consciences ceaselessly reproaches them for their past gluttony and debauches.

16. Below A we see the *passionate* and the *revengeful* falling savagely upon one another and tearing at each other's hair.

17. Below S the *slothful* are represented as being pierced through with tongues of flame, stung by scorpions and nailed to the inside of eternally burning braziers.

18. Breakers of the Ten Commandments and profaners of the Seven Sacraments are seen being stamped upon under foot by a seven-headed and ten-horned monster, whose hot flaming breath suffocates them.

19. *In the left-hand bottom corner* are seen centaurs trampling under their hoofs heresiarchs, those who had been guilty of working up false prosecutions and suits, and those who had attacked religion writing and publishing bad books, newspapers, magazines, etc.

20. *In the center of the infernal abode* appears a large dial, the single hand of which always points to the same hour, and that hour E_{TERNITY}, signifying thereby that the torments of the damned will last *for ever* and that once fallen into hell, escape from it is closed for all *eternity*.
