

## **THE APOSTLES' CREED.**

### ***Art. 6 (cont.): And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.***

**1.** The Creed says that Christ *sits*, meaning thereby that He is resting and in the enjoyment of a never-ending bliss.

**2.** Jesus is *seated* in heaven like a king upon his throne or a judge upon the bench. In this double capacity He is both legislator and judge. Before quitting the world, He said: « *All power is given Me in heaven and on earth.* » (*Matt. XXVIII, 18.*)

**3.** Jesus sits, the Creed goes on to say, « at the right hand of God the Father ». This does not mean that God has right or left hand, but, as ordinary speech to place any one on your right is to accord to him the place of honour, these words are merely intended to convey the idea that Jesus, who as God is equal to the Father, is as man raised above all other creatures.

**4.** It is of course to the Passion of Our Lord, whose merits opened the door of heaven to the just, that we owe our redemption and our salvation; but of His Ascension it must be said that that it reveals itself to our minds not only as an effective object lesson to make us direct our thoughts and aspirations and raise ourselves in spirit heavenwards, but as a divine force to inspire us with the necessary strength to attain that goal. And not only this, but it sets the pinnacles of the edifice of our faith, strengthens our hope and directs all our longings towards heaven.

**5.** We say that the Ascension sets the pinnacle to the edifice of our faith, since faith is concerned only with things beyond the ken and the reason and understanding of man. Now if Our Lord had remained among us, He would have made everything so obvious to us that there would have been no merit in possessing faith. As Christ himself says: « Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed.' (*John XX, 29.*)

**6.** Then, as we have said, the Ascension is the very thing to strengthen the hope that is in our hearts. The belief that Jesus went up to heaven

and as *man* is seated at the right hand of God the Father, furnishes us with a powerful reason for hoping that we who are His members, that we too shall one day go up to heaven to be united there to our Head. And this the more because of His own declaration of such reunion: « Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me. » (*John* XVII, 24.)

7. One of the most signal benefits which the Ascension of Our Lord confers on us is, as has been said, that it directs all our longings heavenwards, inflaming, as it does, our hearts with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Most truly has it been affirmed that « where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also » (*Matt.* VI, 21). Now it is certain that had Christ remained among us, all our desires would have been limited to seeing Him and being in His company. We should have looked upon Him as no more than a mere man who loaded us with favours and should have had for Him a purely human affection.

8. By leaving us and going up to heaven He has spiritualized our love for Him, and as we can now reach up to where He is only in thought, we are perforce drawn to adore Him and love Him as a God. We know this from the case of the apostles themselves. So long as the Saviour was among them, their feelings towards Him were purely human, as of one man towards another. Over and above this, we have the testimony of Our Lord Himself: « It is expedient to you that I go. » Of a truth that imperfect love with which they loved Him while He lived with them, required to be perfected under the influence of the divine love, that is to say, by the descent of the Holy Ghost. And immediately after, to the above remark he added: « *For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you.* » (*John* XVI, 7.)

9. The Ascension was the dawn of a new development here below for the Church, that veritable house of Jesus Christ, the government and direction whereof were about to be placed under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. At the time to represent Him among men, Christ had placed at the head of the Church as Chief Pastor and Sovereign Pontiff St. Peter, prince of the Apostles; but since then, in addition to the twelve, he has never ceased to choose others, some of whom he makes apostles, others prophets, some evangelists, other pastors and doctors, continuing from His place at the right hand of His Father to endow each one with the gifts necessary for his calling. Thus the Apostles declares to us that « to every one of us is given of Christ » (*Eph.* IV, 7.)

## **Explanation of the Plate.**

**10.** The picture represents Jesus Christ seated in heaven at the right hand of His Father on a throne of glory; the angels and saints surround Him, and His throne is supported by a host of heavenly spirits. The Father holds the sceptre, the Son the Cross and both support between Them the world, created by the Father, redeemed by the Son and sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

-----