

The Feast of the Holy Trinity

THE APOSTLES' CREED

In the first place, the Creed has until now been divided into twelve articles. Yet, if all the doctrinal points that are written in the Scriptures and that belong to the Creed were to be distinctly set forth, there would be far more articles. They could not all be clearly expressed in so few words. But to make the Creed most easily and clearly understood as it is to be taught to children, we shall briefly sum up the entire Creed in three chief articles, according to the three persons in the Godhead [Colossians 2:9]. Everything that we believe is related to these three persons. So the First Article, about God the Father, explains creation. The Second Article, about the Son, explains redemption. And the Third, about the Holy Spirit, explains sanctification. We present them as though the Creed were briefly summarized in so many words: I believe in God the Father, who has created me; I believe in God the Son, who has redeemed me; I believe in the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies me. One God and one faith, but three persons. Therefore, three articles or confessions.

A BRIEF EXHORTATION TO CONFESSION

Besides this public, daily, and necessary confession, there is also the confidential confession that is only made before a single brother. If something particular weighs upon us or troubles us, something with which we keep torturing ourselves and can find no rest, and we do not find our faith to be strong enough to cope with it, then this private form of confession gives us the opportunity of laying the matter before some brother. We may receive counsel, comfort, and strength when and however often we wish. That we should do this is not included in any divine command, as are the other two kinds of confession. Rather, it is offered to everyone who may need it, as an opportunity to be used by him as his need requires. The origin and establishment of private Confession lies in the fact that Christ Himself placed His Absolution into the hands of His Christian people with the command that they should absolve one another of their sins

[Ephesians 4:32]. So any heart that feels its sinfulness and desires consolation has here a sure refuge when he hears God's Word and makes the discovery that God through a human being looses and absolves him from his sins.

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