Catechism Question for Week of July 17- July 23, 2016

QUESTION 10: Will God allow such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?
Answer: Certainly not, but He is terribly displeased with our inborn as well as our actual sins, and will punish them in just Judgment in time and eternity, as He has declared: **"Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them (Deut. 27:26**)."

EXPOSITION: In the exposition of this Question, we must consider the Evil of Punishment, which is the other part of the Misery of Man. In relation to this we are taught that God punishes sin most severely, justly, and certainly. He punishes it most severely, that is, with present and eternal Punishment, on account of its enormity and greatness, because it is an offence against the infinite Good.
Most justly, because every sin, even the smallest transgression, is a violation of the Law of God; and, therefore, according to the order of Divine Justice, *deserves* eternal punishment and banishment from God.
Most certainly, because God is True, and does not change the sentence which the Law denounces: **"Cursed is he that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. 3:6)**

Objection 1: But the wicked often prosper in this life, and do many things with impunity. Therefore, all sins are *not* punished.
Answer: They will at length be punished: yea they are even in this life punished,

1. In the conscience, by whose stings the wicked are tortured.
2. Also, in those things which they use with the greatest eagerness and delight; and the less they know, and acknowledge themselves to be punished, so much the heavier it is.
3. They are also often afflicted with other grievous punishments. And yet their punishment will be still more dreadful in the life to come, where it will be everlasting death.

Objection 2: God did not create evil, and death. Therefore, He will not punish sin so severely.
Answer: He did not, indeed, create them in the beginning; yet when sin was committed He inflicted death, in His Just Judgment, upon sinners, according to the threatening: **"You shall surely die!" (Gen. 2:17)** Wherefore it is likewise said: **"Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord has not done it?" (Amos 3:6)**

Objection 3: If God punish sin with present, and everlasting Punishment, He punishes the same offence twice, and is unjust. But He is not unjust; neither does He punish the same offence twice. Therefore He will not punish with present and everlasting punishment.

Answer: We deny the major proposition; for the Punishment which God inflicts upon the wicked in this, and in the life to come, is but one Punishment, although it consists of several parts. Present Punishment is but the *beginning* of Everlasting Punishment. Neither is it separate, or complete in itself, because it is *not* sufficient to satisfy the Justice of God.

Objection 4: Sins which are different in their character are not punished with an equal punishment. Therefore all sins are not punished with eternal punishment.
Answer: There is more in the conclusion than in the premises. This is all that legitimately follows; therefore all sins are not punished with equal punishment, which is true. But all sins, even the smallest, *deserve* Eternal Punishment, because all offend the infinite and eternal Good. Hence all sins are punished equally as to *duration*, but not as to the *degrees* of Punishment. Great sins will be punished eternally, with severe punishment, while smaller ones will be punished eternally, with lighter punishment.

Objection 5: But if God punish sin with eternal punishment, then all of us must either perish, or else the Justice of God is not satisfied.
Answer: It is true, indeed, that if God were to punish sin in us, we would all necessarily perish forever. But He does not punish sin in us with Eternal Punishment; and yet His Justice does not suffer on this account, because He has made a satisfaction for our sins in Christ, by inflicting upon Him a Punishment equivalent to that which is eternal. It is in this way that the Gospel satisfies the Demands of the Law.

Objection 6: But if God has punished our sins in Christ, He ought not, if He is Just, to inflict further punishment upon us; so that the afflictions of the righteous in this life are unjust.
Answer: The afflictions of the righteous are not to be regarded as a punishment or satisfaction for sin; but they are merely the chastisement of a Father, sent for the purpose of humbling them. Hence it becomes necessary for us, after we shall have given an exposition of the following question of the catechism, to speak of afflictions.