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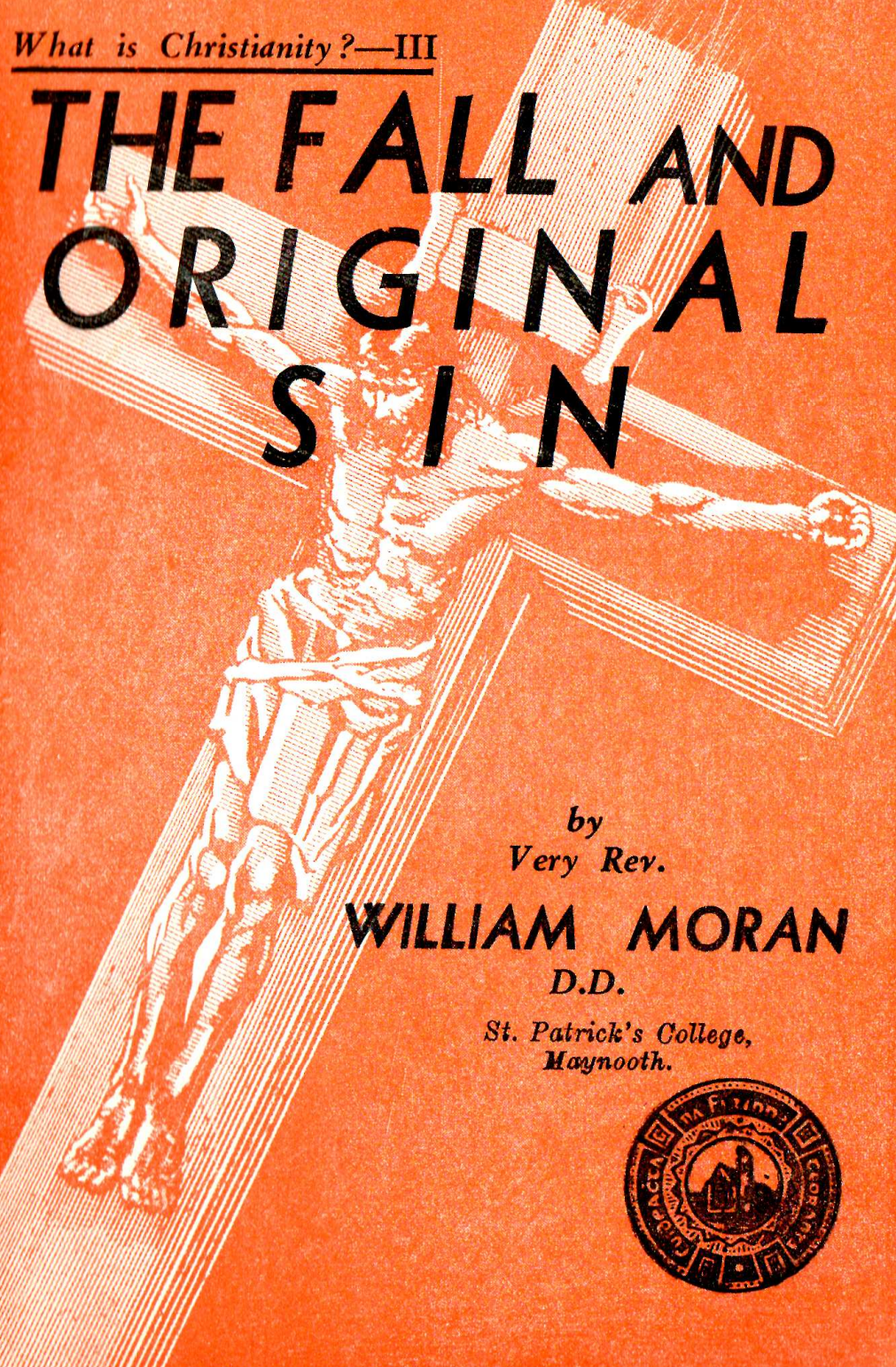
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What is Christianity?—III

THE FALL AND ORIGINAL SIN



by
Very Rev.

WILLIAM MORAN

D.D.

St. Patrick's College,
Maynooth.



WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

By

VERY REV. WM. MORAN, D.D.,

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THE FALL AND ORIGINAL SIN

Being the Third Booklet in a Series entitled "What is Christianity?" by V. Rev. Wm. Moran.

We have seen that Adam, before his fall, had been raised to the same supernatural status, to which Christians are now raised by baptism. He had also received certain preternatural gifts, including immunity from bodily death. We have now to consider the consequences of Adam's sin, not only for Adam himself but for the whole human race. The subject is dealt with at some length by S. Paul in his letter to the Romans. As the sense is a little difficult to follow in our Douay Bible, I shall quote the more intelligible translation made by Canon Boylan in his commentary* on the *Epistle to the Romans*:

“For if, when we were enemies,
we were reconciled with God
by the death of His Son,
so shall we, thus reconciled,
with all the more reason be saved by His life.
And not merely this—
but we boast also of God,
through Our Lord Jesus Christ,
by Whom we have now attained reconciliation.
As, therefore, through one man
sin entered into the world,
and by sin death,
and so death passed on to all men,
because all (had) sinned—
For up to the Law

* Dublin: M. H. Gill; 1924.

sin was in the world;
 but sin was not imputed
 in the absence of law.
 Yet Death reigned
 from Adam to Moses
 even over those who did not sin
 after the manner of the transgression of Adam,
 who was a type of the future (Adam).
 But not as it was with the transgression
 is it with the gift of grace.
 For if, through the transgression of one
 the many have died,
 so, all the more,
 have the grace of God,
 and the gift in the grace of the one man,
 Jesus Christ,
 superabounded unto the many.
 And with the gift it is not
 as with the outcome of the deed
 of the one man who sinned:
 for the judgment proceeded from one man
 unto condemnation;
 but the gracious gift proceeds from many trans-
 gressions
 unto justification.
 For if, through the transgression of one,
 Death reigned through that one,
 so will they, who have received
 the superabundance of grace,
 and of the gift of justification,
 all the more reign in life,
 through the One Jesus Christ." (Rom. v)

One man brought sin into the world; and sin in turn brought death, which in the present order of God's providence is a penalty for sin, and would not have to be borne

by men except for sin. "And so death passed on to all men, because all had sinned." Then the Apostle imagines somebody putting the objection; but all have *not* sinned; for instance, the people who lived before the publication of the Mosaic law. Even if these people did things, which they knew to be wrong, they at least did not sin in the same sense as Adam. They did not violate a clear law of God, since no law of God had been promulgated to them. *A fortiori* they did not violate a law, to which the penalty of death was attached. The Apostle might have added that many of them did nothing at all wrong; for then, as now, many children died before they came to the use of reason.

What is the Apostle's answer to this objection? He answers: Yes, every man of them sinned, even those you speak about. And the proof of it is that every one of them had to die, and their death was a penalty of their sin. I admit indeed that they did not disobey God by their own personal act, as Adam did, but they sinned somehow; otherwise they would not have had to die. How then did they sin? They sinned in and through Adam, "who was a type of the future Adam." Adam was head and representative of the human race, as Christ was to be later. And Adam, in his capacity as head and representative of the whole race, offended God, and thus made us as well as himself sinners; just as later on, Christ, as head and representative of the race, was to win back justification and salvation for all of us.

The Apostle here breaks off for a moment to compare the influence of Adam and of Christ respectively on our spiritual fortunes: and he shows that the profit-and-loss account is in our favour. The good wrought by Christ in our favour more than counterbalances the evil wrought by Adam. He points out, for instance, that while Adam

brought on us condemnation for one sin only, Christ atoned not only for that sin, but also for all our own personal sins as well: "and with the gift it is not as with the outcome of the deed of the one man who sinned: for the judgment proceeded from one man to condemnation; but the gracious gift proceeds from many transgressions unto justification."

In a final summary of the parallel between Adam and Christ, he shows how all men have been made sinners (even children who die in the womb), and consequently how all men come into the world under sentence of death. We are all sharers in that original transgression of Adam, to which the penalty of death was attached. "As then through one transgression it has come to condemnation for all men, so also through one justifying it comes to justification leading to life for all men. For, as through the disobedience of one man the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of One, the many shall be made just."

There we have S. Paul's exposition of the doctrine of original sin. It is a doctrine which, if imperfectly understood, can be, and probably has been, a stumbling block to thousands of people, who would otherwise be members of the Catholic Church. The pity is that people should be frightened away by the apparent harshness and injustice of the treatment meted out by God to the human race, according to this doctrine, when as a matter of fact it is in perfect harmony with all our human notions of justice and fair play.

At first sight the idea of inherited sin appears to be absurd. How can an act of disobedience to God, committed by another man thousands of years ago make me a sinner? The answer is that it *cannot* make me a sinner in the sense you probably have in mind, when you ask that question.

But it *can* make me a sinner in another sense, which you probably never thought of. And before I go on to explain the difference between these two senses, it may be well to state at the outset what was the practical effect of Adam's sin for his posterity. It was this: *they lost the supernatural and preternatural gifts, that God had intended to confer upon them.* That was the sum total of their loss: no other penalty, no other punishment. God took from Adam's posterity nothing whatever that was due to them: He merely reduced them to the level of what was due to them—instead of giving them (as He had planned) gratuitous gifts, to which they had no right or title as human beings. The principal gratuitous gifts that God had planned to give us, were adoptive sonship of God in this life, leading to the Beatific Vision of God hereafter in heaven. Adam himself was stripped of these gifts too. But Adam by his sin had deserved something more in the way of punishment, than the mere loss of purely gratuitous gifts. He had wilfully offended God, and offended Him seriously. By doing so, he had made himself liable to positive punishment in hell. He did not make his posterity liable to this positive punishment. They become liable to it, only if they themselves wilfully offend God by their own personal acts. All became liable to exclusion from heaven; but mere exclusion from heaven is very different from positive punishment in hell.

Although Adam's fall did not directly cause to his posterity any other loss than that of supernatural and preternatural gifts, a further deterioration in the moral condition of mankind soon followed as a kind of consequential loss. Once the brake on man's concupiscence was removed by the withdrawal of his preternatural gifts, his unruly passions soon led him into so many actual sins, that "sin abounded" in the world, as S. Paul says. In writing the passage already quoted, the Apostle had before his mind

not only the state of sin inherited from Adam, but also the progeny of further sin that followed it. Nevertheless, we should not confuse the two. We must ourselves shoulder the responsibility for our own sinful acts; it is ours, not Adam's.

An example will illustrate the effects of Adam's fall. When William the Conqueror took possession of England, he introduced the feudal system, to consolidate his power. He parcelled out the country among his followers, giving great baronial estates to his chief supporters, who in turn parcelled out these estates among working tenants. The king's grant to his great barons was a permanent grant; but it was conditional. The conditions were something like these:—

Each baron and his heirs were to give faithful allegiance to the king and his heirs, and were to furnish a certain number of fighting men to assist the king, whenever he required them. So long as these conditions were fulfilled, enjoyment of the estate was guaranteed, not only to the great baron himself, but also to his heirs. On the other hand, if the baron ever rebelled against the king, he was to forfeit the whole estate, not only for himself but also for his heirs.

Suppose now that one of these barons rebelled against the king, and was crushed by the king's forces; what would be likely to happen? The baron's estate would be confiscated by the king, and given to some follower more likely to be faithful to the Crown. Note that *the baron's wife and children would share his loss*. The baron himself would probably lose his head on the charge of high treason. But his wife and children would not suffer the same fate, unless they were themselves mixed up in the rebellion.

Adam corresponds to the rebellious baron. Adam's liability to be sent to hell corresponds to the baron's liability to lose his head. The supernatural and preternatural gifts granted to Adam correspond to the great estate granted to the baron. The loss of these gifts corresponds to the confiscation of the baron's estate. There is this difference between the two cases. In receiving the estate, the baron was receiving something he probably had some claim to, inasmuch as he had earned some reward by helping the king to conquer the country. In receiving the supernatural gift of adoptive sonship of God (with the right to a supernatural destiny hereafter), and the preternatural gift of immunity from bodily death, Adam received something to which he had no claim or title whatever. God might never have given these gifts either to Adam or to his posterity. It was by an act of gratuitous liberality that He ever gave them at all. He gave them conditionally; the condition being that Adam should serve Him faithfully. When Adam rebelled, God did no injustice either to Adam or his posterity by withdrawing these gifts. The condition, on which they were given, had not been kept.

Note, moreover, that while God vindicated His honour and His authority by withdrawing these gifts, yet He showed His mercy by immediately promising to make arrangements to have them restored again. We have just heard from S. Paul what these arrangements were: The Son of God came on earth and took human nature; and in that nature made reparation of honour to God for human sin—not only for the original transgression of Adam; but for all human sins—and thereby merited for us the restoration of the gifts that had been lost. We do not come into the world in actual possession of the gifts. We are born children of Adam, and not of Christ. We only become children of Christ, when we are "born again of water and

the Holy Ghost" in baptism. It is only then that we begin to enjoy the supernatural gift of adoptive sonship of God, won for us by Christ. Because we are born children of Adam and not of Christ, we come into the world without the preternatural gift of immunity from death: we come into the world sentenced to die. But Christ has nevertheless won back for us bodily immortality. It will be given to us in due time, when human history is brought to a close at the general resurrection. Body and soul will then be re-united, never to part again.

From what I have said so far, it will be evident, I think, that God has not treated man either unjustly or harshly; and that the doctrine of original sin contains nothing to offend our sense of justice or fair play.

But you may say: if original sin involves no other loss than that of purely gratuitous gifts, why does S. Paul use such expressions as "condemnation of all men," "the many were made sinners," "we were enemies of God," and so on? What is the justification for such strong language, if what I have already said be correct? The easiest way to answer these questions is to show that each of the expressions quoted has its counterpart in the ordinary language of human intercourse. You may think it strange, for instance, to hear the Apostle say that we have all been condemned for something done by Adam. Yet the principle underlying S. Paul's statement is applied every day in our own courts, and never causes any surprise. I mean the principle of solidarity and collective responsibility between the members of a corporate body. An example will illustrate what I mean.

Suppose a 'bus goes through a busy crossing in defiance of the traffic signal, and in doing so wrecks a private car, and kills one of the passengers in it. The accident will give rise to two distinct actions in the courts. The police

authorities will bring a criminal action against the 'bus driver for dangerous driving and for manslaughter. The driver alone will have to face this charge; and if he is found guilty he may be sentenced to a period of imprisonment. The other action will be a claim for compensation—compensation to the owner of the car for the loss sustained by him, and compensation to the family of deceased for loss of salary or wages, if he happened to be the breadwinner of a family. Note that it is not the 'bus driver alone that will be the defendant in this second action; the company, of which he is the servant, will be defendant also. And that means that, if I am a shareholder in the company, I am one of the defendants in the case, and eventually will have to pay my share of costs and compensation.

But why should I be made pay for the damage? It was not I, but the driver of the 'bus, who did the harm. When the police brought the criminal charge against the 'bus driver, they did not even consider putting me in the dock with him. Why then does the civil court allow me to be cited as defendant in the other action? Here we have an application of the principle I mentioned a moment ago. Almost unknown to ourselves, we admit two kinds of responsibility. One of these may be called individual responsibility. It is the responsibility incurred by virtue of my own personal free acts. The 'bus driver was the only person who was responsible in that way for the accident. For that reason he alone is prosecuted by the police; for our sense of justice rebels against the idea of sending a man to jail for a crime for which he had no individual responsibility. To put it another way, imprisonment is a punishment in the strict sense of the term; and punishment in the strict sense is not justified, except there is personal guilt freely incurred.

The other kind of responsibility is that which I have for an act done by a corporation or moral body, of which I happen to be a member. It is a responsibility shared by all the members of the corporation. For that reason it may be conveniently called my corporate responsibility, to distinguish it from my individual responsibility already explained. It is because of this corporate responsibility for the damage done by the 'bus driver, that I shall have to pay my share of the compensation in the illustration I have given. The court says: "This driver was acting as the servant and agent of the company when he did the damage. For the purposes of the claim before us, the driver and the company must be regarded as forming a moral unit. For that reason we must hold the company responsible for the damage; and we give a decree accordingly." The cost of compensation will fall on me in proportion to my share of the company's responsibility; in other words, in proportion to the amount of capital I have invested in the company. Now, although people would think it very unreasonable if the *criminal* court were to send all the shareholders to jail for the accident, people do not think it unreasonable if the *civil* court condemns the share-holders to pay costs and compensation. They regard corporate responsibility as sufficient ground for an adverse verdict in the civil court, but not in the criminal court. Why? Well, I think the reason is that the payment of compensation is not regarded as a punishment in the strict sense of the word, but rather as restitution for an injury caused unjustly.

Now, to be bound to restitution I must be responsible in some way for the injury done. A civil court, for instance, will dismiss a claim for damages, if it can be shown that the injury suffered by plaintiff was due to an unavoidable accident, for which nobody can be held responsible. If I can be bound as a shareholder, therefore, to pay compen-

sation in the imaginary case already described, it must be because the court (and the public) recognise that there is another kind of responsibility besides what I have called undivided responsibility. It is clear that they recognise likewise that this other (corporate) responsibility may be a sufficient reason for condemning me to pay a penalty, in the shape of loss of some of my property; though it is not a sufficient reason for sending me to jail—that is, it is not a sufficient reason for condemning me to a punishment in the strict sense of the word. There is a difference between the two concepts, penalty and punishment. The latter implies individual or personal guilt; the former does not. A person condemned to pay a penalty can leave the court with his head erect; one who is punished is expected to hang his head for shame.

Suppose now that the compensation decreed by the court is so high, that the total assets of the company are unable to meet it. What happens? The company is smashed; its property is all seized to pay the debt; and my investments in it are all lost. Will the creditors come and sell out my house and furniture also? No: my own private property will not be seized. I shall lose only the capital I have invested in the company. The reason is because the solidarity existing between me, on the one hand, and the other shareholders and servants of the company, on the other hand, extends only to the affairs of the company. I have no solidarity with any of them in respect of my house and furniture.

Now Adam might be compared to the 'bus driver; but instead of being a mere servant, he was the chairman of the company (the human race). He drove his 'bus through God's law, wrecked the scheme of things planned by God, and gravely injured God's honour. He thereby rendered *himself* liable to a criminal prosecution, and if found

guilty, to everlasting imprisonment in hell. Adam alone was defendant in this case. He also had to face an action for damages to God's honour; and in this action we were all defendants with him as members of the company. The company was unable to make full reparation, and went bankrupt; with the result that all the capital invested in the company was lost. That capital was the *supernatural and preternatural gifts* given or arranged for us by God. Our private property, however, was not seized—that is, our natural gifts, the gifts due to us as rational animals. We were condemned to the losses we sustained on the ground of our corporate responsibility, on the ground that the driver (Adam) was acting as the agent of the company when he did the damage.

You may say: "Yes, I can see how God, without any injustice, could take away those purely gratuitous gifts He had given conditionally; but I cannot see how Adam could make all men sinners. Sin is a *wilful* offence against God: how then can I become a sinner except by my own personal act?" Here again a few illustrations may help to clear up the difficulty.

Suppose a deputy, while making a speech in a national parliament, is struck across the face by another deputy. The offender will be expected to apologise for the insult. Suppose he refuses to do so. He may be expelled from the chamber of deputies; but that will not finish the trouble. A state of estrangement will ensue between the offender and the aggrieved party. Notice that the incident, which caused the trouble, was only a momentary affair; while the state of enmity that follows may last a lifetime. Well, sin is like that. We have to distinguish the wilful offence (the actual sin), which may be the work of a moment; and the state of estrangement from God, which it causes; and this may last a lifetime, or

even for eternity. When St. Paul says that Adam made sinners of us all, he does not mean that Adam made us all take a hand in committing the wilful offence. He means that Adam by his offence got us all into a state of estrangement from God. He got us all put "on the back of the books" with God. But, you will ask, how could Adam drag us into his quarrel with God? It is a question, as before, of our corporate responsibility. But an illustration is the easiest way of making the matter clear.

In 1914 England and Germany were parties to an undertaking about the inviolability of Belgian territory. The violation of that agreement meant war between them. The German Government took the fateful decision to invade Belgium; and it thereby committed not only itself, but the whole German nation to a state of war with England.* The German working man, who had no part in the decision, was made an enemy of England, no less than the Kaiser himself. It was like the compensation case already discussed. Every German citizen had his share of corporate responsibility for the actions of the political entity; and the action of the political entity, in making the fateful decision about Belgium, was actually exercised by a few representatives of that entity, namely, the men who composed the German Government. The war guilt attached to all Germans in the eyes of England. Consequently, the property held by German citizens in England was confiscated; and when the war was over, penalties and indemnities were imposed on the German nation—not merely on the Kaiser, who had abdicated and fled the country†

* It is possible that war would have come about independently of the Belgian question. But I am considering the situation as it actually developed.

† The same idea underlies the theory of "total war," which inspired much of the bombing of open cities during the years 1940-1941.

In quoting this example, I merely wish to point out that the principle of corporate responsibility is recognised among nations in a far more drastic form, than is required by our doctrine of original sin. Adam committed his posterity to a state of war with God, as the Kaiser and his Government committed the German people to a state of war with England and France. That is what S. Paul means, when he says that Adam made us sinners and enemies of God. But we must bear in mind that there is a certain amount of metaphor in these expressions. The state of estrangement from God, into which we were dragged by the sin of Adam, must not be understood as a state of active hatred and active hostility, as was the case in the Great War. Even though men were in some sense His enemies, yet we are told "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever believes in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent His Son into the world, not to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him" (John iii. 16-17). In human wars men try to kill the enemy: in this war God tries to save His enemies.

How are we to understand this state of war, in which men are born enemies of God, and yet objects of His love? Or, if you like to put the question this way: what is there about the soul of an unbaptized baby, to make it an object of displeasure to God? That brings us to the real kernel of original sin.

When God raised man to a supernatural state and supernatural destiny, His design in our regard was that all men should come into the world, and should remain for ever His friends and adopted sons. Once God had made that plan for mankind, the mere fact of being outside the state of adoptive sonship—outside the state of sanctifying grace—put a man in a position that was displeasing to

God, contrary to His plans, and therefore conveniently known as a state of sin. Now that is precisely the state in which Adam placed us. Adam's sin upset God's plan in our regard. In consequence of the fall, we now come into the world without any supernatural gifts: we are born deprived of sanctifying grace, deprived of the adoptive sonship of God and the right to heaven. The absence of these supernatural gifts is the first and principal element that goes to make up the state of original sin. Yet original sin does not consist in the mere *absence* of these gifts, but in the *privation* of them. I shall try to explain the difference between these two concepts, privation on the one hand, and mere absence on the other.

If God had never raised man to a supernatural state at all, we should be born (as we are born at present) without any supernatural gifts. Yet in that case the state of our souls at birth would not be a state of sin. The absence of supernatural gifts would be *in accordance with* God's original design in our regard, and consequently *could not be displeasing* to Him. What makes the condition of a new-born baby displeasing to God now is not simply the absence of supernatural gifts (sanctifying grace and the right to heaven), but the absence of supernatural gifts that *ought to be present*. That is what *privation* of sanctifying grace means—absence of grace which ought to be present. Grace ought to be present in the soul of the new-born babe, *according to God's original design in our regard*. But we actually come into the world *deprived of grace in consequence of sin*. The absence of grace in a new-born baby, therefore, has a special significance. It is the consequence of sin; it is the token and reminder of sin; it is contrary to God's original plan for that child. That is why it is displeasing to God; that is why it can be called a state of sin. There, in brief, is what constitutes the state of original sin—the privation of sanctifying

grace, which ought to be present in the soul.

I can imagine somebody reminding me that he learned in his catechism that the fall of Adam brought on us a darkening of the understanding, a weakness of the will, and an inclination to evil. Now let us see what that means. Suppose you wanted to see a championship football match at some well-known stadium, such as Croke Park in Dublin. You might look on from the best place you could find along the railing, that surrounds the pitch. You are on the same level as the movements you are watching; yet you cannot see the game to your entire satisfaction. That is why the governing body has erected artificial stands for the spectators. Now, suppose the chairman of the association saw you standing at the railing, and invited you up to a seat beside him on the best part of the stand. You can now see all the movements of the game much better. Now suppose you commit some offence against the regulations, as a result of which you are ordered off the stand. You are down on the ground level once more, and you cannot see the game nearly so well as when you were on the stand. *But you are no worse off, than if you had never gone up on the stand at all.* Then towards the end of the game another friend comes along, and takes you up on the stand at the other side of the pitch: and you find that you have a fine view of the game once more.

Now, your original place at the railing (i.e., on the ground level) represents the natural level of man's powers of intellect and will, in dealing with his spiritual problems. But God did not leave Adam on that level; He brought him up on the stand. God gave certain preternatural gifts to Adam in his capacity as head of the human race. These gifts, according to Catholic tradition, included special enlightenment of intellect, and special strength of will, to enable him to keep his lower appetites in subjection

to reason. It was only by the loss of these special gifts that any darkening of the understanding and weakening of the will came about by the fall of Adam. There is no evidence whatever that any natural gifts were lost.*

Hence there is no ground for saying that men are any blinder or weaker in the spiritual order now, than they would be, if man had never been raised to a supernatural state at all. In a pagan country men are blinder now (in regard to spiritual things) than Adam was. They are blinder than they themselves would now be, if there had been no sin. That is because they are now on the ground level, instead of being on the stand.

Missionaries working in pagan countries often remark on how palpable is the darkness of paganism. His first contact with it sometimes gives the young missionary an uneasy feeling. But remember that the missionary is no longer on the ground level. Christ has put him (and us) on the other part of the stand. If we have lost the preternatural gifts that Adam had, we have others in their place. We have the light of God's revealed truths; we have the enlightening and strengthening influence of the teaching and example of Christ; we have God's grace to help us in our struggles with temptation. It is true that God wishes to be asked for these graces, and that the better we cooperate with those He gives us, the more abundant will be those we may expect from Him. But for the man who attends to his prayers, religious duties and the frequent reception of the sacraments, salvation does not appear to be any more difficult than it was for Adam. In the passage already quoted from Rom. v, S. Paul seems to suggest that the balance is rather in our favour, on account of the

*Hence Pius V in 1567 condemned this proposition from the works of Michael du Bay: "God could not have created man in the beginning as he is now born." Du Bay was insinuating that man's nature is now mutilated.

superabundance of grace merited for us by Christ. For the same reason S. Augustine exclaims: "O Felix Culpa"—O lucky fall!

The explanation I have given you of man's deterioration after the fall is the one held almost universally in recent times. Among the older theologians, however, many held that, besides the mental and moral deterioration suffered by man through the withdrawal of preternatural gifts, man's intellect and will were in themselves directly weakened by the fall. There is nothing, however, in the teaching of revelation to compel us to take this view. It does not square with our ideas of divine justice. And no intelligible explanation can be offered as to how the deterioration in question was brought about. Exaggeration is a common fault of biographers. They like to extol unduly the natural gifts of their heroes. Some of Adam's biographers were prone to the same fault.

It may be of interest, in connection with original sin, to say a word about the fate of unbaptized children, who die before they come to the use of reason. As these children die without the gift of sanctifying grace, which makes a person adoptive son of God and heir to heaven, they are excluded from the supernatural destiny planned for them by God (i.e., the Beatific Vision of God). But they are not subjected to any kind of positive punishment in the next life. God is a "just judge," who "will render to everyone according to his works." He will only punish those who deserve punishment; and a child is incapable of deserving punishment. Some early theologians took a more rigoristic view of their fate, on the ground that God may be expected to punish all sin, even original sin, in the next life. This rigoristic view has been abandoned in modern times, for the simple reason that it cannot be reconciled with divine justice. Positive torture (however

light) in the next life would be a punishment in the strict sense of the word "punishment;" and such punishment is only justified by personal guilt, incurred by one's own free act. The loss of the Beatific Vision, on the other hand, is not a punishment. It is a penalty, consisting in the privation of a purely gratuitous gift, which God had planned to give, if certain conditions had been fulfilled.

The Church has never issued a solemn definition dealing with the precise point just discussed—that is, whether unbaptized children will suffer any positive punishment in the life to come. But she has given official approval to the milder view, by incorporating in the collection of Canon Law (*Corpus Juris Canonici*) the following words of Pope Innocent III. "The penalty of original sin is privation of the vision of God: that of actual sin is the torture of an everlasting hell." He is speaking, of course, of actual mortal sin.

Man was not created merely for the destiny due to a rational animal: he was created for a far nobler destiny—the supernatural destiny, known as the Beatific Vision of God. To miss that destiny is to lose the end for which he was created: it is to have failed in life; it is to be "lost." For that reason unbaptized children are said to be "lost." Their condition hereafter is also described as a state of "damnation," because the loss of their supernatural destiny is a penalty of sin. But, though these terms are technically correct, they do not imply, in the case of unbaptized children, the meaning which we usually associate with "damnation," namely, condemnation to the torments of hell. Such punishment is meted out only to those, who deserve it by their own personal sins.

OBJECTIONS AND DIFFICULTIES

Among non-Catholics, belief in the dogma of the fall ap-

pears to have become very unsettled during the last century or so, partly because of the dissemination of rationalistic views about the character of the opening chapters of the book of *Genesis*, but more particularly on account of the widespread belief in the evolution of the human body from an ape or monkey stock. The evolutionist is apt to reject as unhistorical the whole story of the Garden of Eden, and with it the Scriptural account of the *manner* of the fall. From the rejection of the latter in turn, it is an easy step, though an illogical one, to the total denial of the *fact* of the fall; and if one denies the dogma of the fall, one is logically compelled to deny the dogma of redemption also. In this way belief in the evolution of man might easily lead, and in some cases has actually led, to a hasty rejection of the most fundamental truths of Christianity.

The fact of the fall and the manner of the fall are really distinct and independent questions. For the fact of the fall the Church has pledged her infallible authority; for the precise manner of the fall she has not.

In regard to the precise manner of creation, and the precise manner of the fall, the Church has not committed herself irrevocably to any particular view; though she provisionally accepts as historically reliable the account of both recorded by *Genesis*. She tacitly admits, therefore, the possibility of a readjustment of Christian belief in regard to these matters of detail. She does not, however, admit even the remote possibility of a re-adjustment of doctrine in regard to the facts as distinct from the manner of their happening. With all the authority she commands, as the divinely-appointed and infallible guardian of Christian revelation, she bids us accept the fact of creation, the fact of the fall, and the fact of redemption through Christ's passion and death, as truths divinely revealed and beyond the possibility of question.

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