

Faith of Our Fathers

[A WEEKLY INSTRUCTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD.]

THIRD ARTICLE.—MAN AND ORIGINAL SIN.

I. The Origin and Fall of Man.

14. God, who created pure intelligences for the peopling of heaven, made for the earth's population intelligences united to bodies; or, in other words, He made man.

Having provided the earth with plants and animals, and accomplished the formation of visible nature, God lastly made a creature, destined to be the crowning of His work, namely, man, the chief and king of the visible creation. He made him to His own image and likeness, endowing him with a mortal body and an immortal soul, which was intelligent and free, and capable of knowing, loving, and serving his Creator.

15. The first man was called Adam. God made his body out of clay, and animated it with His breath. Then He created Eve, whom He mysteriously formed from a rib of Adam, because she was to be his spouse and his inseparable companion. Adam and Eve are the first parents of the whole human race; and from them alone are descended every race and variety of man which is spread over the surface of the globe. They were created perfect, with the full use of reason and of speech; and moreover they were endowed with the fulness of precious gifts bearing relation to their sublime destiny.

16. This destiny was to know, love, bless, and serve God on earth, and to glorify Him eternally in heaven.

It is true that, regarding only the nature of man, it would seem to be adapted especially for earth. He was a terrestrial creature, having a body and intelligence, and his place would seem to be in the visible world, of which he should be, as it were, the pontiff, to praise God in His works, and himself to enjoy the peace of a good conscience, which is the natural fruit of virtue. But, in His mercy, God raised man to a destiny far above his earthly nature. He destined him to be a brother to the angels, and to share heaven together with the blessed spirits; and therefore God enriched man at his origin with most excellent gifts and qualities.

17. The most important of these gifts of God was that of sanctifying grace, called also *original justice*, because it was granted to man from his origin. To this first treasure God added others, namely, integrity or exemption from concupiscence, infused knowledge, immortality, and felicity. All these gifts were gratuitous and superadded to man's nature; and Adam, if he had remained faithful to God, his Benefactor and his Master, would have transmitted them to all his descendants.

Thus enriched with graces and privileges, Adam and Eve were placed in the terrestrial paradise, a garden of delights which God had prepared for them, that they might live there in innocence until the time when, without suffering death, they should be transported to the celestial paradise, their glorious and eternal home. But all these good things were lost to them by their sin.

18. God willed that these creatures of His hand should remain always obedient to Him. He therefore imposed on them a strict command, which was, however, easy to observe, namely, that they should not, under pain of death, eat of the fruit of one particular tree in the garden of paradise. Adam disobeyed, and ate some of the fruit at the solicitation of Eve, who had been led away by the serpent, or rather by the devil, who had assumed the form of that reptile in order to make our first parents fall into sin, and to accomplish their ruin, and that of all their descendants.

Punishment immediately followed the sin. Adam and Eve were turned out of the terrestrial paradise, deprived of all the gratuitous gifts of God, and condemned to live on the earth as in a place of exile until the moment of their death.

This lot was also to be that of all their posterity; for, having lost all the good things with which they had originally been endowed, they could no longer transmit them to their children. They left us instead, alas, together with their sin, all the multiplicity of pains and evils which are the inheritance of sinners, and thus brought about the actual condition of humanity, which is that of a fallen and

guilty race. This is the dogma of original sin, the doctrine of which follows.

II. Doctrine Respecting Original Sin.

19. All men sinned in Adam their first parent, in this sense, that his sin, together with its consequent evils, are transmitted by means of generation to all his posterity. All men are born, therefore, guilty and children of wrath. They bear in their souls, which were created to the image and likeness of God, a mark of the Evil One, which obscures the image of the Creator. This is original sin, so called because man contracts it in his very origin. The Council of Trent defines it thus: "The sin, in so far as it is renewed by generation in every human being born into the world, is real guilt, inherent in his nature."

20. The children of Adam inherit, not only his sin, but all the effects of sin. These effects consist in losses and punishments. (1) Man lost by sin all the gratuitous benefits with which his nature was endowed in the persons of our first parents—sanctifying grace, or original justice, as well as the celestial glory of which this grace was the pledge; and in the natural order he forfeited corporal felicity and immortality. (2) He merited positive penalties—the anger and indignation of God and the shameful slavery and tyranny of the devil. Moreover, fallen from his primitive felicity, man has impaired his condition both of body and soul. His body has become subject to death, to sickness and pains, and to all those miseries which nature, transformed into an enemy, ever inflicts on him. His soul also has been attacked and wounded deeply.

The wounds caused by sin in the soul are, according to the doctrine of the Venerable Bede, ignorance in the mind, malice, and inclination to evil in the will; and in the senses, weakness, and what is called concupiscence, or the inclination towards sensual pleasure, honors, and riches. These four wounds, taken collectively, constitute the *fomes peccati*, from which emanates that moral malady which works upon human nature and inclines it to evil.

21. Original sin is remitted by baptism, whose regenerating waters wash away all the guilt contracted in our birth. After this spiritual cleansing no shadow of sin remains; but we are like new-born children of God; we are notwithstanding still liable to concupiscence and to all the miseries of this life. God leaves us these difficulties that we may turn them into subjects of combat and triumph. Only at the day of corporal regeneration—that is to say, at the glorious resurrection—shall we be entirely delivered from them.

Such is the doctrine revealed by God and taught by the Church regarding original sin. In this doctrine is contained a great mystery.

Who'll Buy My Dreams?

I go from door to door,
Peddling my fancy rimes;
Some look them critically o'er,
Saying, "We've seen such stuff before,
Write something for the times."

But some with eager eyes
Read them, and read again
With growing wonder and surprise,
Till visions of the soul arise,
Up-conjured by the strain.

A pedler of dreams am I,
Along the world's highway;
From door to door my trade I ply,
Crying aloud, "Who'll buy? who'll buy?
Who'll buy my dreams to-day?"

—J. LEWIS MILLIGAN, in the *London Graphic*.

When a man has forfeited the gift of faith he sometimes retains the external semblance of this precious garb; but close inspection reveals the shoddy.

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