THE FOUNDATION OF TRUE MORALITY

Thomas Slater, S.J.

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THE FOUNDATION OF TRUE MORALITY

The Foundation of True Morality

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Preface

IN the modern world, progress in the art and science of living has not kept pace with progress in the other arts and sciences. Man does not lead a better and a happier life than he used to do. There are many indications that human conduct is getting worse, and that men are more discontented, more miserable than they used to be. One means of moral progress would be to provide a sound and universally accepted code of ethics. The world would then have, at least, a moral standard by which human actions could be judged. It would go a long way toward forming a healthy public opinion on all moral questions. The Christian religion furnishes the highest moral standard ever manifested to the world. Unfortunately, there are two fundamentally different conceptions of Christian morality—the Catholic and the Protestant conception. Perhaps if we put them side by side the truth will appear. With this object I have written the following pages.

Chapter I: Man a Moral Agent

IS man a moral or a merely physical agent? Are all man's thoughts, words, and actions determined by merely physical and necessary laws like those of electricity or steam? If man is a merely physical agent, then morality is only a department of physics, and, without doubt, it will be an important department of physics. It is important for us to know the laws which govern the action of gravitation, or of electricity, or of steam, but it is still more important for us to know the laws which govern the action of men. If man is nothing but matter and force, by patient study we shall be able to predict his every thought, word, and action with as much certainty as we can predict the action of a steam-engine or of a motor-car. Such knowledge would be invaluable for governments, employers, and parents. It would not be less valuable for the private citizen, the employed, and for children still under parental sway.

But is man a merely physical agent, a mere natural machine? Is man's action determined solely by the antecedents and conditions of action, so that if we knew them all we could predict infallibly what that action would be? Or is there something in man which clearly distinguishes his action from that of merely physical causes?

Man certainly is not an ordinary machine. He has the wonderful gift of knowledge. He knows what will happen if he fastens down the safety-valve of a steam-engine, and what is likely to be the consequence if he directs his motor-car against a stone wall. He has a further wonderful power if the common sense of mankind is a safe witness to truth. Just as he has the power of knowing and planning different courses of action, so he has the complementary power of choosing among different courses of action. He can fasten down the safety-valve of the steam-engine, if he chooses to do so, and he can drive his motor-car against a stone wall if he likes. In the department of morals man can know the difference between good and evil, and he can choose the good and avoid the evil. That is what I mean by a moral agent. To be a moral agent man must know the difference between good and evil, and he must have the power of choosing freely between them. Both elements are necessary. A child who has not come to the age of reason lacks knowledge, and so, if he does wrong, we do not blame him, though we may correct him, for he can be improved by correction. If a monomaniac does wrong we do not blame him, because we know that he has lost the power of self-control. But if a grown up man of sound mind does wrong, we blame him, and sometimes punish him, and we say he deserves it.

The practical reason of the normal man himself not only tells him what is right or wrong, but when he has done right it approves his conduct; when he has done wrong it condemns him. In other words, the normal man has a conscience, and conscience is keenly sensible of right conduct, and of wrong conduct. If wrong was done through ignorance or mistake conscience is not disturbed, it says: I am not responsible, I could not help it. But if a man, knowingly and willfully, does wrong, then his conscience condemns him, even when nobody else knows of his wrong-doing. He knows that he is responsible for the wrong, that he is the cause of it, and that he need not have done it, and should not have done it.

All this shows that man is something quite different from an ordinary and necessary physical agent, and so we give him a special name and call him a moral agent. As a moral agent man is endowed with

knowledge of what is morally right and wrong, and he is endowed with freedom to choose between them.

The chief Protestant reformers vehemently denied that after Adam's fall man had the power of free choice between good and evil.

In his treatise, "The Bondage of the Will," Luther asserted that "in his actings toward God, in things pertaining to salvation or damnation, man has no free will, but is the captive, the subject, and the servant, either of the will of God, or of the will of Satan." Again, "if we believe that God foreknows and predestinates everything... it follows that there can be no such thing as free will in man or angel, or any creature."[1]

[1] Quoted by E. H. Browne, The Thirty-nine Articles. Art. 10.

If this be so, Erasmus had asked in his book against Luther, who will strive to correct his life? "Nobody," answered Luther, in the same work, "The Bondage of the Will." "Nor can anybody do so. However, the elect and good are corrected by the Holy Spirit. The rest will perish uncorrected. If you say that the door is opened to wickedness by this teaching, I answer: So be it. Nevertheless, by this same teaching the door is opened to justice and the entrance to heaven is gained."

Calvin is, at least, equally emphatic. "The mind of man," he says, "is so wholly alienated from God, that it can conceive, desire, and effect nothing but what is impious, perverted, foul, impure, and flagitious; the heart is so steeped in the venom of sin that it can breathe forth nothing but fetid corruption."[1] The Anglican reformers were above all anxious to keep as many as possible within the limits of the national Church and they were studiously moderate in their teaching on this important point of doctrine. Article 10, On Free Will, is worded thus:

[1] Institut. Lib. ii., c. v. 19.

"The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God; wherefore, we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will and working with us when we have that good will."

Of course, there is no room for free will in the modern theories of the mechanical evolution of the universe. Man is and must be simply what the forces of nature and of society have made him. "It is almost beyond dispute," says Mr. Bertrand Russell, in his "Philosophical Essays," "that man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms. In action, in desire, we must submit perpetually to a tyranny of outside forces." Church by Satan, let him be anathema."[1] Thomas H. Huxley opposed the doctrine of the freedom of the human will on the ground that it was contrary to the principle of causality. He says:

The Catholic Church has ever been the consistent and outspoken defender of human liberty. For freedom of the will lies at the root of all other human liberties and is the necessary condition of them. In the early ages of the Faith she defended the freedom of the human will against the Manicheans and Priscillianists, and she was not remiss in defending the same truth against the errors of Luther and Calvin. The Fathers of the Council of Trent pronounced the following anathema against them:

“If any one says that the free will of man is lost or extinguished after Adam's sin, or that the substance is about a title only, and, indeed, a title without substance, and, in fine, a figment introduced into the "Whoever accepts the universality of the law of causation as a dogma of philosophy denies the existence of uncaused phenomena. And the essence of that which is improperly called the free-will doctrine is that occasionally, at any rate, human volition is self-caused, that is to say, not caused at all; for to cause oneself one must have anteceded oneself — which is, to say the least of it, difficult to imagine."[2] called the will, which is free. Just as when we see an external object the power of vision has to be stimulated into action by a ray of light coming from the object to the retina of the eye, so before an act of volition our will-power has to be stimulated into action by a thought. The will cannot act without the antecedent thought, but the doctrine of free will asserts that ordinarily, at least, the will is not determined to any definite action by the thought. The will can accept the thought or reject it or simply remain passive, and in that wonderful power the essence of free will resides.

Of course, the doctrine of free will does not imply that volition is ever self-caused, and it is not contrary to the law of causality. An act of volition is called free because it is the effect of a power of the human soul

[1] Sess. vi. c. 5.

[2] "Essay on Science and Morals." The Catholic doctrine of free will is not opposed to the principle of causality nor is it opposed to the true doctrine on divine grace.

Luther maintained that after man's fall the grace of God is absolutely necessary to enable man to think or do anything that is good. For man's nature was thoroughly corrupted by the fall. Henceforth, sin was of his very nature, he cannot help committing it, he commits it with every breath that he draws. The involuntary movements of appetite and concupiscence are sins: does not the Apostle say so?

Natural benevolence is mere hypocrisy; for by nature man hates and must hate his neighbor. “By nature I cannot utter a friendly word or make a friendly sign, and if I do it is only hypocrisy; the heart, at least, remains full of venom."

So deep rooted is this natural corruption of man that it remains even in the just. When God gives His grace to man, and thereby makes him just, He only turns His eyes away from man's natural foulness and gives him His favor on account of the merits of Christ which He imputes to him.[1]

Man's will takes no part in the process of justification. "It is like a beast of burden; if God mounts it, it goes where God drives it; if the devil, it goes where the devil drives it. It cannot choose its rider, but the riders quarrel among themselves as to which shall get into the saddle."[1] Some recent writers have seen in such doctrines as these the cause of that amazing moral insensibility of the German mind which displayed itself during the great war.

[1] J. Verres, "Luther: An Historical Portrait," pp. 127, 128.

Very different from this is the teaching of the Catholic Church. She teaches that by the fall man was, indeed, deprived of sanctifying grace and of certain preternatural gifts by which man's lower appetite was restrained and kept within the bounds of reason so that he was not troubled even by its involuntary rebellion. Still man's nature was not entirely corrupted by original sin. It was still capable

of good. We can, indeed, do nothing without God's help — in Him we live, move, and have our being. But the Catholic Church distinguishes two sorts of divine help. There is the divine help of the natural order, by which God preserves, sustains, and cooperates with His creature in all his actions. This divine concursus is necessary for man, it is required by his nature, which is essentially and always dependent on its Creator. But besides this natural help and cooperation of God, which is never wanting as long as God sustains His creature, there is the supernatural help of God's grace. This supernatural help is given freely and gratuitously to man to enable him to attain the supernatural end of the intuitive vision of God to which God has freely and gratuitously called him. Without God's supernatural grace man can do no good action of the supernatural order. He cannot take a single step toward his supernatural end. The Catholic Church further concedes that the grace of God is necessary to enable man to persevere and to keep God's commandments for any long period of time. Man's weakness in the face of continual temptation is too great to permit of his avoiding sin for very long without the special help of God's grace. But still by his natural resources and with the natural help which God gives him, even fallen man can do ethically good actions and avoid sin for a time.

[1] J. Verres, "Luther: An Historical Portrait," p. 190.

This doctrine is truer, more consoling, and more helpful than that of the reformers. Historically, the doctrine of man's absolute and utter corruption has not tended to maintain a high standard of moral conduct.

Chapter II: Legalism

CATHOLICS are sometimes puzzled when they read contemptuous allusions to "legalism" made by non-Catholic writers on ethics. They feel that an attack is being made on the moral teaching of the Catholic Church, but they are often unaware of what the attack implies. After all there is a moral law, a right and wrong in morality, as there is in arithmetic. As arithmetic has its laws so has morality. If it is important to keep the laws of arithmetic, much more important is it to keep the laws of morality. If there are moral laws there is a moral lawgiver, and why should the precepts and commands of the moral lawgiver be sneered at, and those who think that they should be obeyed treated with contempt?

To show more clearly the question at issue between Catholics and non-Catholics, I will quote a recent and very moderate writer on ethics. Mr. J. MacCunn, in 1903, published a little book entitled "The Making of Character," in the Cambridge series for schools and training colleges. In that book occurs the following passage:

"These difficulties bring us to a parting of the ways. Once the ineffectual generality of precepts has made itself felt, two courses lie open. One is to see in this fact a final proof that a morality of precept is unequal to the demands of life, and to turn from it to a morality that centers its hopes in the training of individual judgment. The second is to refuse to give up the morality of precept without a struggle, and to set resolutely to work to make it adequate to those facts of concrete moral experience by which the morality of code is tested and found wanting. It is the adoption of the second course that leads to the third phase of the morality of precept, that supreme effort to make moral dogmas adequate to life, which gives rise to casuistry."[1] serve days and months and times and years." But we are free "with the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free. Stand fast and be not held again under the yoke of bondage. Behold I, Paul, tell you that if you be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing.... You are made void of Christ, you who are justified in the law, you are fallen from grace. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by charity."[1] position between the law and the Gospel, an opposition which, as he proudly boasts, he was the first to discover. "The Gospel does not preach what we must do or omit, but bids us open our hands to receive gifts, and says: Behold, dear man, this is what God has done for thee, for thy sake He has made His Son assume human nature. This believe and accept, and thou shalt be saved. The Gospel only shows us the gifts of God, not what we have to give to God, or to do for Him, as is the wont of the law." "Law is what we have to do, the Gospel what God is willing to give. The former we cannot fulfill, the latter we receive and apprehend by faith." "The Gospel is good tidings, it is not a sermon on works of ours. He who says that the Gospel demands works, necessary for salvation, is a liar." "That the law should have been abolished, so that it can no longer condemn those that believe, was just as necessary, as that it should have been given." "The law and the Gospel are two quite contrary things, which cannot be in harmony with each other by the side of each other." "He who knows how to distinguish between the law and the Gospel may thank God and consider himself a theologian." "When the conscience is terror-stricken on account of the law, and struggles with the judgment of God, do not consult reason or the law, act exactly as if thou hadst never heard of the law of God. Answer: There is a time to live and a time to die; there is a time to hear the law and a time to despise the law. Let the law be off and let the Gospel come." "If you do not ignore the law, if you are

not sure in your heart that there is no law, that there is no wrath of God, but only grace and mercy through Christ, you cannot be saved." "If you do not send away Moses with his law, and in those tremblings and terrors lay hold of Christ, who has suffered for your sins, it is all over with your salvation." "The decalogue has no right to accuse and to terrify the conscience, in which Christ reigns through grace, for through Christ those laws have become antiquated." thing." "Christ's work consists in this: to fulfill the law for us, not to give laws to us, and to redeem us. The devil makes of Christ a mere Moses."[1] Lord.[1] This is what Luther says about them. "For instance, the commandment — Thou shalt have no bad desires — proves that we are all sinners, and no man can be without bad desires, let him do whatever he likes. From this he learns to distrust himself and to look elsewhere for help to be freed from bad desires, and to fulfill through some one else the law which he himself is incapable of fulfilling. As soon as man begins to learn and to feel from the laws of God his own incapacity he becomes thoroughly humble and annihilated in his own eyes."[2] if he wishes he cannot lose his salvation on account of the greatest sins, unless he refuses to believe. Apart from unbelief, no sins can damn him. If faith returns to the promises made by God to the baptized Christian, or if it does not depart from them in an instant, all sins are blotted out by it or rather by the divine veracity; for if you confess God and abandon yourself to His promises with confidence He cannot deny Himself."[1] These extracts from Luther's works show quite plainly what was his attitude toward the moral law. A recent German writer, Loofs, says very truly that "in the opposition between the law and the Gospel lies the chief difference between the Lutheran and the Catholic conception of Christianity." The Lutheran doctrine tended to divorce morality from religion and make it a matter belonging exclusively to the conscience of the individual. The tendency was increased by the influence of the Kantian philosophy, which sneered at the heteronomy of Catholic morality and proclaimed the autonomy of the human reason in the sphere of morals. Good men see and lament the moral chaos of the modern world. Outside the Catholic Church there are few practical principles of conduct on which even Christians are agreed. As against the morality of commandments and codes, Mr. MacCunn insists on the cultivation of a sound moral judgment. A sound moral judgment, he says, has three elements. It involves character, deliberation, and knowledge. There must be knowledge of means and ends, good ends. But what are good ends, and what are we to do when there is a conflict between them, as not unfrequently happens? We may not have recourse to casuistry, but, says Mr. MacCunn, "there is little safety if there be not in the mind a well-compacted and habitually-cherished ideal with which each isolated end that claims adoption may be confronted."[1] But where are we to get such an ideal? Alas, as we advance from youth to age we learn to reject many ideals that we once entertained. There are many disillusionments in life. But cannot we start life with a good ideal, with the true ideal which every man should place before himself all through life? "They are found," says Mr. MacCunn, "in those conceptions of the supreme End of life, which philosophy has been giving to the world since the days of Socrates. They are diverse as the philosophies that have devised them: duty, perfection, greatest happiness, greatest blessedness, self-realization and the rest."[1] tained in the law of Moses. The ceremonial and judicial precepts of the Old Law have ceased to bind, as St. Paul taught the Romans and the Galatians; the moral precepts of the decalogue were expressly reaffirmed by Christ. Love is indeed the great commandment which sums up the law and the prophets, but love manifests itself in obedience — If you love Me keep My commandments—If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments. And if any doubt were possible as to which commandments He meant, we know from His own divine lips that He meant those of the decalogue—“Thou shalt do no murder.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness. Honor thy father and thy mother. And: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[1]

There, certainly, is the parting of the ways. The one is the Protestant attitude toward all codes of morality, including the decalogue, the other is the Catholic attitude. Which is right?

To understand the Protestant attitude we must go back to Luther and his Commentaries on St. Paul. After St. Paul had converted the Galatians to the faith of Christ, some false teachers, who were Jews, came to them and tried to persuade them to join circumcision and the observance of the ceremonies of the Mosaic law with the faith of Christ. In his Epistle to the Galatians St. Paul tells them that such a course is wrong.

"But now after that you have known God, or rather are known by God, how turn you again to the weak and needy elements which you desire to serve again? You ob-

[1] Loc. cit., p. 152.

Luther professed a special predilection for the Epistle to the Galatians. He said he took it to him for his spouse, as he had done Catharine von Bora. There and in the Epistle to the Romans he saw the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and the uncompromising condemnation of the law and legalism. It will be well to quote him at some length on this latter point.

According to Luther there is a direct op-

[1] Gal. iv. v.

Luther had a positive hatred for Moses and for his law. "If you are prudent," he says, "send that stammering and stuttering Moses with his law far away from you, and be not influenced by his terrific threats. Look upon him with suspicion, as upon a heretic, excommunicated, damned, worse than the Pope and the devil."

"I will not have Moses and his law, for he is the enemy of the Lord Christ. We must put away the thoughts and disputes about the law, whenever the conscience becomes terrified and feels God's anger against sin. Instead of that it will be better to sing, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to be merry in spite of the devil." "No greater insult can be offered to Christ than to suppose that He has come to give commandments, to make a sort of Moses of Him." "Only the mad and blind Papists do such a By the law in these passages Luther did not mean merely the ceremonial and judicial precepts of the Old Dispensation; he meant especially the moral precepts of the natural law contained in the ten commandments. Those moral precepts were the only portion of the Mosaic law which the Catholic Church taught had been ratified and promulgated anew by Jesus Christ. The violation of them alone could cause the terrible stings of conscience for which Luther was so anxious to find a remedy. Moreover, he in express terms repudiated the decalogue, the ten commandments in their entirety. Bad desires, if willfully consented to, are certainly sins against the natural law, and against the express teaching of Christ, Our The impossibility of observing the moral law, and the consequent necessity of committing sin, gives its supreme importance to Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone. In his work on the "Babylonian Captivity," he writes:

[1] J. Verres, "Luther: An Historical. Portrait," p. 130 ff.

"You see how rich the Christian is, even

[1] Matt. v. 28.

[2] J. Verres, "Luther: An Historical Portrait," p. 136.

In a famous letter to Melancthon, Luther wrote: "Sin, and sin bravely, but believe and rejoice still more bravely in Christ, the Conqueror of sin, of death, and of the world. As long as we are here below there must be sin. It is sufficient for us to acknowledge the Lamb who bears the sins of the world; then sin will not be able to separate us from Him even if we were unchaste a thousand times a day or committed a thousand murders."[2]

[1] Pagnier, Luther et l'Allemagne, p. 75.

[2] Pagnier, loc. cit. p. 76.

[1] Op. cit. p. 188.

But will any of these ideals do, are they all equally good and equally true though diverse and different? Yes, for practical purposes, is apparently the answer of Mr. MacCunn. He says: "If we would know that an end is good, we must be able to satisfy ourselves that it is in harmony with a settled and coherent ideal of life."[2]

Modern skepticism has invaded the sphere not only of speculative truth but of morality also. The Catholic still clings to Jesus Christ and His teaching. He condemns Pharisaic legalism, the exaggerated worship of the law coupled with its merely external observance. But he maintains that Christ was a true lawgiver inasmuch as He enacted anew the natural precepts con-

[1] Op. cit. p. 194.

[2] Op. cit. p. 188.

[1] Matt. xix. 18, 19.

Chapter III: Casuistry

IN his translation of "The German War Book," Professor J. H. Morgan makes such reflections as the following: "It will be obvious that the German staff are nothing if not casuists."[1] "This represents 'The German War Book' in its most disagreeable light, and is casuistry of the worst kind."[2] It is taken for granted that no more severe condemnation of immoral reasoning could be uttered than to say that it is casuistical. Some justification of this opprobrious meaning attached to casuistry is furnished by the Gospel. The condemnation of the Pharisees by Our Lord could hardly be more severe, and one reason for

[1] P. 3.

[2] P. 85, note.

that condemnation was their casuistry. "Woe to you, blind guides, that say: Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but he that shall swear by the gold of the temple is a debtor. Ye foolish and blind; for whether is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?... Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law: judgment and mercy and faith. These things you ought to have done and not to leave those undone."[1]

There have been lax casuists in the Catholic Church who deserved severe condemnation of this kind, as we learn from the decrees of Alexander VII, Innocent XI, and Alexander VIII. But the rooted dislike of non-Catholic writers to casuistry is not accounted for merely by its abuses. They seem to condemn casuistry in itself. Catholics find it difficult to understand this atti-

[1] Matt. xxiii. 16-23.

tude of non-Catholics toward casuistry. They think it obvious that very little experience of life shows that sometimes it is difficult to decide what is the right and what the wrong course of action in particular circumstances. What is more natural than for one who wishes to do right to consult some one who has made a special study of morality?

In order to understand this divergence of view we must go back to Luther and the Protestant Reformation. Luther scornfully rejected the Catholic doctrine that the Church is the divinely appointed teacher of faith and morals. He substituted the Bible for the Church, and declared that a believing Christian infallibly interpreted the Bible for himself. "They lie," he says, "who maintain that the Pope is the judge of the Scriptures. Pardon, Squire Pope, I say: he who has faith is a spiritual man, and judges of all things, and is judged by nobody. And if a simple miller's girl, nay a child nine years old, has faith and judges according to the Gospel, the Pope owes obedience and ought to throw himself at their feet, if he means to be a genuine Christian. And this is likewise the duty of all Universities, and learned men and sophists."[1] Bible, but that ideal is applied to conduct and to the particular actions of everyday life by the conscience of each one. The individual conscience is the ultimate judge of right and wrong, and it is worse than impertinent intrusion for any one else, however learned he may be, to trespass within those sacred precincts. If this be the main principle of Christian morals, there is obviously no room for the casuist and for casuistry. We see that what history has taught us was inevitable. In the Lutheran, Calvinistic, and Anglican sects casuistry

survived for some time, but now it seems to have disappeared almost entirely. Non-Catholic writers on Christian ethics confine themselves to generalities and ideals without venturing to descend to the ordinary actions of everyday life. In consequence their teaching to a great extent is impractical. Politics, law, international relations, business, all lie outside the sphere of morality, and the inner life of the individual is a sanctuary where no other may intrude.

A recent writer, Otto Ritschl, says that “when the question is asked whether a lie is permissible to save a persecuted person, we still care too little for 'what the conscience of the person concerned decides and what he feels to be quite definitely his duty.' We still fail, he thinks, 'to perceive that one's own conscience is the ultimate judge of what is morally good and bad, and that the judgment of conscience frequently does not coincide with the generally received code of morality.' "[2]

According to Protestant principles then a believing Christian gets his ideal from the

[1] J. Verres, "Luther: An Historical Portrait," p. 120.

[2] Mausbach, "Catholic Moral Teaching," p. 87.

This result is intensified by the Protestant view of legalism and Christian liberty. According to Protestant principles the believer's conscience is under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, and is not fettered by commandments and laws. It requires no external guidance in its moral life and it will not tolerate dictation. It instinctively repudiates any attempt to fetter, by casuistical decisions, the freedom which Christ gave us.

Another reason which makes Protestant ethical teaching hopelessly at variance with everyday morality is its refusal to recognize the Gospel distinction between counsels and precepts. Not everything in the Gospel is intended for everybody. Our Lord occasionally proposed an exalted course of moral conduct which he knew was above the moral strength of many. He said: "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given."[1] And yet Protestants refuse to admit that there are counsels of perfection in the Gospel. They see nothing there but the preceptive will of God.

The effect of the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone has been to remove the stress laid by the Catholic Church on good actions. It is true that Luther taught that good works would be the result of justification by faith, just as a good tree produces good fruit. Still he knew by his own experience that this was not uniformly the case, and he considered it no small advantage of his doctrine that good and bad works were thrust into the background by his fundamental theory of justification. As long as faith remained, works, whether good or bad, were of comparatively small account. As long as a Christian man clung to his ideal, was affable and generous, his individual actions ought not to be too closely scrutinized either by himself or by others.

[1] Matt. xix. 11.

Very different from this is the Catholic attitude toward casuistry. As Professor R. M. Wenlez remarks: "Quite obviously, the two conceptions proceed from antagonistic theories of the nature of the Christian religion as a whole."[1]

The Catholic has very definite ideas about moral law. He does not look upon the moral law as a collection of more or less arbitrary precepts. He sees in it the expression of the necessary relations which exist among human beings. Those relations follow from the nature of things and they will continue to exist as long as human nature exists. They could not be changed even by God Himself,

because they ultimately depend on the essence of God Himself. Luther thought that an action is right because it is accepted as right by God. The Catholic holds that an action is right because it agrees with the right order which

[1] Hastings' "Encyclopaedia of Religion," s. v. Casuistry.

follows from the nature of persons and things, and which God willed when He created them. Because parents are parents and children their offspring, therefore it is right for children to honor their parents. Because human beings are what they are, it is wrong for one to kill another, to steal what belongs to him, or to lie.

Such precepts as Thou shalt not kill are general principles which are to be obeyed in ordinary circumstances. But circumstances change cases and rules. In a just war, in order to defend one's country and one's rights from unjust attack, one may kill the enemy. If it is the only means of saving one's own life one may kill an unjust aggressor in self-defense. The criminal forfeits his life by serious crime and may be put to death by public authority. Those are well recognized exceptions to the general rule, they are the outcome of altered relations which arise from altered circumstances. Right reason affirms that in a conflict of rights, the right of the innocent should prevail over the right of the guilty who provoked the conflict. There may be other cases where it is not so clear whether the right to life has been lost or not. The casuist lays down what is certain and then proceeds to discuss the doubtful cases. In doing this the ordinary casuist does not strive to reduce the moral law to a minimum, nor does he seek to throw off its yoke. There may have been some casuists who yielded to such unworthy motives. Not all doctors or scientific men are honest. But the ordinary casuist tries only to discover what is right or wrong in the nature of things and what right reason prescribes. In his investigations he questions nature and tries to get at nature's verdict, not less than the man of science.

The Catholic maintains that the moral law governs all man's activity. The safety of the race as well as of the individual depends on the right exercise of marital relations. The casuist, therefore, treats of what is right and what is wrong in those relations as in all others connected with human life. He does not wallow in such subjects as one might expect he would from the horror with which Harnack upbraids casuists for their practice. It is, at least, as much the duty of the moralist to investigate what is right and wrong in such matters as for the doctor or the scientist. The books of the casuist are not meant for innocent boys and maidens, they are technical works specially intended for the confessor and parish priest. Mr. MacCunn, in his book, "The Making of Character," thinks that casuists err in trying to make life conform to their system, instead of making their system conform to life. But what if the casuists' system is merely the moral law, the objective standard to which all human action should conform? Is it a mistake to maintain the absolute supremacy of the moral law?

The same writer thinks that casuists attempt the impossible when they strive to solve all sorts of imaginary or real cases. The complexity of life, he thinks, baffles even the casuist. Mr. MacCunn is mistaken in thinking that this is the aim of the casuist. The casuist is well aware of the infinite complexity of human life. What the casuist has chiefly in view is the training of the student, so that he may become expert in perceiving at a glance what principles are applicable to the solution of any particular case, and so that his judgment may be relied on to apply those principles correctly.

The same writer also thinks that the casuist errs in trying to maintain his system of morals in spite of the fact that the world has outgrown the system. But what if the system of the Catholic moralist is not his own or any other human system? What if it is the will of God Himself made known to man and taught by Jesus Christ? "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." The world has not yet risen to the height of Christian morality, much less transcended it.

Chapter IV: Counsels and Precepts

LUTHER rejected the distinction between the counsels and precepts of the Gospel with scorn. He says: "This distinction only shows that those who make it do not know what the Gospel is. What the Papists call counsels are, in fact, precepts, for instance the words of Our Lord:[1] If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other; If a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him; Whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two.... Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."[2]

[1] J. Verres, "Luther: An Historical Portrait," p. 153.

[2] Matt. v. 39-44.

It was not merely his necessary opposition to vows of religion which he had broken that led him to adopt this attitude toward counsels in general. He was forced into it by his fundamental doctrine of justification by faith alone, and his consequent disparagement of good works. If faith alone saves us, good works fall into the background, and distinctions between them, of good and better, of precept and supererogation, become migratory. As Luther himself says: "In this faith all works are equal and one is the same as another; all difference vanishes between works, whether they be great, small, short, long, many or few. For the works are not pleasing for their own sake, but for the sake of the faith, which alone and without distinction is present, works, and lives in each and every deed, no matter how many and how various they may be, just as all the members receive life from the head, and move and have their name; and without the head no limb can live, move, or have a name."[1]

In this Luther has been followed by almost all Protestant writers. "The Protestant theologians," says J. O. Hannay, "denied that there was any choice given to man between a higher and a lower kind of Christian life. The fundamental command to love the Lord with all the heart was binding upon all, and as there was no possibility of doing more than this so every failure to attain to the fullness of such love was sin."[2]

They assert that the Catholic doctrine of good works leads to the division of Christian morality into two stories, the lower one of the commandments and the higher of the counsels.

Whether the Catholic doctrine does this or not we shall see just now, but in the meantime let us not omit to notice what the Protestant doctrine implies. It implies that nothing short of the most absolute and most perfect love will suffice to fulfill the commandment. Not only is every act against charity sinful, but anything short of the most perfect charity possible is sinful also. In all our actions we are bound under pain of sin to act with the highest degree possible of perfect love. We are never permitted to relax our efforts. What is less good than might have been achieved is sinful. The sphere of what is permissible vanishes, every action is either the best possible or it is sinful. Such moral perfection is for the blessed in heaven, it is not possible for men on earth. It necessarily leads to that other Lutheran doctrine, that it is not possible to keep God's commandments, we all sin necessarily by every breath we draw. It also leads to that practical divorce of religion from everyday life which is so characteristic of modern Christianity. Of course Probabilism becomes a total perversion of Christianity in the light of this Protestant doctrine.

[1] Mausbach, "Catholic Moral Teaching," p. 251.

[2] Hastings' "Encyclopaedia of Religion," iv. 204.

The Catholic doctrine about counsels of perfection is professedly based on Holy Scripture. According to that doctrine Christian perfection is not proposed as the aim of a favored class, it is proposed to all. "Be you therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," were words addressed by Our Lord to all His followers. The holiness of God Himself was proposed to them as their ideal of moral conduct, not that they could hope to equal the infinite perfection of God, but they were bidden to practice all kinds of virtue and never to stop in their pursuit of greater and higher attainment. This Christian moral perfection consists in charity, love of God and our neighbor. There is no greater or higher perfection than what is commanded in the words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[1] as are not in extreme want is the first degree of the counsel of alms-deeds" — to lend or give to such as are in extreme want is, of course, a commandment not a counsel — "to give it them is a degree higher; higher still to give all, but the highest is to give oneself, dedicating our person to their service.... Virtues have then a certain sphere of perfection, and commonly we are not obliged to practice them to the height of their excellence. It is sufficient to go so far in the practice of them as really to enter upon them. But to go farther, and to advance in perfection, is a counsel, as the acts of heroic virtues are not ordinarily commanded, but counseled only. And if upon some occasion we find ourselves obliged to exercise them, it is by reason of some rare and extraordinary occurrence, which makes them necessary for the preservation of God's grace."[1] commandments there are certain essential elements, a certain minimum of observance, without which the virtue does not exist and the commandment is not fulfilled. This is true even with regard to divine charity itself, the queen of all the virtues, the first and greatest of the commandments. There is a certain minimum without which divine charity does not exist, but rising above that minimum there is an infinity of degrees of perfection, which, step by step, leads up toward the infinite perfection of God Himself. To quote St. Francis of Sales again: "Though there are so many degrees of love amongst true lovers, yet is there but one commandment of love, which universally and equally obliges every one, with an exactly like and entirely equal obligation, though it be observed differently, and with an infinite variety of perfection; there being perhaps no souls on earth, as there are no angels in heaven, who are perfectly equal to one another in their love.... It is a love which must prevail over all our loves, and reign over all our passions. And this is what God requires of us — that among all our loves His be the dearest, holding the first place in our hearts; the warmest, occupying our whole soul; the most general, employing all our powers; the highest, filling our whole spirit; and the strongest, exercising all our strength and vigor. And inasmuch as by this we choose and elect God for the sovereign object of our soul, it is a love of sovereign election, or an election of sovereign love."[1] commanded would inevitably fall short of fulfilling the commandments. These principles help us to understand the teaching of Our Lord and St. Paul.

And this command was not given to a select few, it was given to all without exception. Catholic morality is not divided into two stories, a lower story of the commandments and a higher of the counsels. It is true that besides the commandments Catholics recognize in the Gospel counsels also. The Christian scheme of life does not consist in one dead level of uniformity. It does not consist in an impossible ideal, below which all is sin and corruption. Between the highest virtue attainable by

human nature and sin there is a large field of infinitely varied perfection where all who are saved find a place, though perhaps no two are equal. As St. Francis of Sales says:

"In counsels there are various degrees of perfection. To lend to such poor people

[1] Matt. xxii. 37.

So that in all the virtues and in all the

[1] "Treatise on the Love of God," Book viii., c. 9.

Catholic doctrine, then, does not make two stories of Christian morality; there is only one morality for all Christians. The commandments merge into counsels, and counsels in certain cases become commandments. Nobody can practice all the counsels, all should practice some, says St. Francis of Sales. One who should limit himself to the bare performance of what is

[1] "Treatise on the Love of God," Book x., c. 6.

In the first portion of the Sermon on the Mount, which we have in the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, Our Lord lays down the broad principles of Christian perfection. That perfection requires the observance of both commandments and counsels, but Our Lord does not distinguish between them. The first beatitude comprises both commandment and counsel, inasmuch as a certain degree of poverty of spirit or detachment from riches is necessary for salvation, while in its higher degrees it is a counsel only. It is a matter of precept not to lose patience with those who revile and persecute us, while it is a counsel of perfection to be glad and rejoice at such trials. Not to take an unnecessary oath is a matter of precept, to be content in our speech with Yea, Yea; No, No, is, in general, a matter of counsel. Not to resist evil, and to turn the other cheek to the smiter is a matter of precept in so far as it is forbidden to seek private revenge for wrongs done to us, to forego the right of self-defense, or the right to have an injury punished by lawful authority is a matter of counsel, unless some other consideration requires that punishment should be exacted. Reprisals are not morally wrong, and the public authority, in the execution of its duty to its subjects, may be compelled to have recourse to them. To hate one's enemy is wrong and contrary to charity, to show special love for him is a matter of counsel. Luther and Protestant writers generally interpret all these texts as so many positive commands, but the only result is to remove Christian morality far from the sphere of practical human life.

The Sermon on the Mount was addressed to a great concourse of people as well as to the intimate disciples of Our Lord. It contained practical lessons of conduct for all. The most spiritual and the worldly minded alike could draw instruction from it suitable to the wants of their souls. Those who were prepared to give themselves wholly and entirely to God with the utmost generosity, as well as those who were content to save their souls, could take its lessons and apply them to their own special needs. The distinction between precepts and counsels was implicit and implied. On the other hand, in the nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew this distinction is plainly expressed. The young man asked what he was to do to have life everlasting, to save his soul. If thou wouldst enter into life, and save thy soul, keep the commandments, said Our Lord. The young man had kept them all from youth upward, and he asked if there was anything else, better, more perfect, that he could do. "And Jesus saith to him: If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."[1] The words could hardly be plainer. In Christian morality there is something

higher and better than merely keeping the commandments, though it is sufficient to keep the commandments in order to save one's soul. That higher and better course is voluntary poverty, which is not a commandment, not even for the young man —“If thou wilt be perfect," says Our Lord. It is a counsel of perfection, not because it makes those who embrace it perfect in charity, but because it removes out of their path, the love of riches, the greatest obstacle to wholehearted love of God. The evangelical counsels, then, do not form a second story in the edifice of Christian morality, they require and pre-suppose the observance of the commandments, nor do they make those who embrace them perfect; they only place them in a state of life which makes the acquire-ment of perfection comparatively easy. That is why they are called counsels of perfection.

[1] Matt. xix. 21.

Similarly with regard to the counsel of virginity. The disciples had said, If a man cannot have a divorce from his wife, it is expedient not to marry. "All men take not this word," was the answer, "but they to whom it is given.... He that can take, let him take it."[1] Obviously, to marry is good, God has joined husband and wife together, but there is a higher and a better calling for such as feel that they have the necessary grace; that higher and better calling is to observe perfect and perpetual chastity for the love of God.

St. Paul obviously understood it so: "Both he that giveth his virgin in marriage doth well, and he that giveth her not doth better."[2]

[1] Matt. xix. 11, 12.

[2] 1 Cor. vii. 38.

Chapter V: Sin

SIN is a voluntary transgression of the moral law. Voluntariness is of the very essence of sin. Anything that prevents an act being voluntary prevents it being sinful. A motor-car runs over a drunken man lying in the middle of a lonely road at night. The driver could not see him, he had no reason to suspect that he was there. The act was purely involuntary. A little child runs in front of his car while driving along the street. The driver saw the danger but could not pull up in time. The child was knocked down, but again the act on the part of the driver was purely involuntary. In both cases common sense acquits the driver of all blame; there is no reason why the most sensitive conscience should be troubled at the mishap.

And so if man is not free, if his every action is determined by the antecedent conditions so that it necessarily follows from them, then man cannot commit sin. He may be dangerous and may have to be put out of the way or shut up like a mad dog, but if he is not free he cannot help doing what he does, and he is not responsible for it. If he does wrong it is his misfortune, not his fault.

Luther denied free will and consequently he should have denied in man the possibility of sin. He did not do that, but his denial of free will deeply colored his view of sin. According to Luther, the fall of our first parents so entirely corrupted man that now it is his nature to sin, he cannot help it. Sin is no longer a work or an action, it is our very nature. Let a man do his best to be good, still his every action will inevitably be bad, he commits sin with every breath that he draws, Luther held that original justice was of the essence of man's nature, and so by its loss that nature was not only corrupted, it was destroyed as far as its spiritual forces were concerned. He denied that evil is a negation and asserted that it was something positive, so that sin has become part of man's nature.[1] As Luther himself says: "It is true that I stand before you as a sinner, that sin is my nature, the beginning of my existence, my conception, not to mention my words, works, thoughts, and subsequent life. How should I be without sin, when I was made in sin, and sin is my very nature and origin?"[2] in the just, but through the instrumentality of faith it is covered over as with a cloak by the merits of Christ, so that it is no longer imputed to the sinner as long as faith remains.

According to Luther, concupiscence is not merely the consequence of, and the stimulus to sin, but it is very sin itself. The motions of our sensual appetite, however involuntary they may be, are sins in the strict and proper sense. Sin remains even

[1] Mausbach, "Catholic Moral Teaching," p. 158. J. Verres, "Luther: An Historical Portrait," p. 127.

[2] Mausbach, Op. cit. p. 159.

Herein lay for Luther the great value and significance of his doctrine of justification by faith alone. It thrust good works into the background, they became matters of less than secondary importance. Works of special merit, of counsel, of supererogation were rejected as Papist inventions; any works of ours are comparatively matters of indifference. But if this is to be held concerning good works it follows that our bad actions are also matters of very small importance. Provided that we lay hold of Christ's merits by faith, and accept the free offer of the Father's love through Christ, we may and we should utterly disregard our own deeds, whether good or bad. The good works do not benefit the believer, nor do the bad actions harm him. Past bad actions remain, bad actions continue to be

performed, no human being can help them, but, thanks to saving faith, they are all covered over by the merits of Christ, and washed away in the Saviour's blood.

Holy Scripture, indeed, teaches that even the just man cannot avoid slight venial faults — the just man falls seven times a day. Luther denied the distinction between mortal and venial sin, or rather gave the distinction a new meaning. For Luther all sins in a believer, however enormous they might be, were venial; and in an unbeliever all sins were mortal. As Harnack says: "Luther considered it a harmful error to distinguish sins according to the substance of the deed done and not according to the faith or want of faith in the agent. A believer commits just as grievous sins as an unbeliever, but in the case of the believer they are forgiven and not imputed to him, while in that of the unbeliever they are retained and imputed, and so to a believer that sin is pardonable which is mortal to an unbeliever."[1] whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit, and, therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated: whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek phronema sarkos, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe, and are baptized; yet the Apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." power, the liberty, to do right or to do wrong. Canons 5, 6 and 7 of the sixth Session all treat of this subject. "If any one says that man's free will after Adam's sin is lost and extinguished, or that it is a matter of words only, yea of words without matter, in fine a figment introduced into the Church by Satan, let him be anathema.

These Lutheran doctrines have much more than a merely historical interest. They color the opinions of many non-Catholic writers on ethics who condemn the casuistry of the Catholic Church and proclaim that provided a man's aim is set on his ideal he does well not to trouble himself much about the details of a moral life.

The Calvinistic doctrine is very similar and leads to similar results. The ninth article of the Church of England is couched in general terms, offering a loophole here and there for various interpretations, but for all that the article is distinctly Lutheran. It is as follows:

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam,

[1] Dogmengesch. iii. 887.

These doctrines of the reformers contain very serious errors in morality according to the teaching of the Catholic Church. In the Council of Trent she solemnly condemned those doctrines. She vindicated for human nature, even after the Fall, the "If any one says that it is not in man's power to do wrong but that God works evil even as He does good deeds, not only by permitting them but properly and by Himself, so that the betrayal of Judas not less than the call of Paul is His works, let him be anathema.

"If any one says that all works that are done before justification, in whatever way they are done, are really sins, and deserve the hatred of God, or that a man sins the more grievously the more vehemently he strives to dispose himself for grace, let him be anathema."

The teaching of Trent is vouched for by Scripture and by the common sense of mankind. Luther himself constantly took it for granted when he was not arguing against it, just as the modern philosopher or evolutionist does in ordinary life. Catholics have constantly appealed to such plain texts as that found in the Book of Ecclesiasticus (xxxi. 8, 9, 10): "Blessed is the rich man... that hath not put his trust in money nor in treasures. Who is he, and we will praise him? For he hath done wonderful things in his life. Who hath been tried thereby and made perfect, he shall have glory everlasting. He that could have transgressed and hath not transgressed, and could do evil things and hath not done them." that concupiscence remains in them that are baptized, which being left for conflict cannot harm those who do not consent to it, but manfully strive against it by the grace of Christ Jesus, since he who strives lawfully will be crowned. The holy Synod declares that the Catholic Church has never understood that this concupiscence which the Apostle sometimes calls sin is called sin because it is properly sin in those that are regenerated, but because it is a consequence of sin and a stimulus to sin. If any one holds the contrary let him be anathema."[1] According to Catholic teaching, sin can only be committed by the free and deliberate consent of the will to what is known to be morally wrong. Frequently, the inordinate motions of the sensual appetite arise without the will having anything to do with them. The will neither causes them nor yields consent to them. In these circumstances the inordinate motions of the sensual appetite cannot be sins in spite of Luther and the Anglican article.

Luther's doctrine about concupiscence, which seems to be approved by the ninth Anglican article, is a doctrine of moral despair. It is reprobated and condemned by the Council of Trent:

“This holy Synod acknowledges and feels [1] Sess. v. c. 5.

The Catholic distinction between mortal and venial sins is also endorsed by the Council of Trent.

"For those who are the sons of God love Christ, and those who love Him, as He Himself testifies, keep His commandments, which they can do with His grace. For although in this mortal life, however holy and just, they may sometimes fall into at least slight and daily faults which are also called venial sins, not on that account do they cease to be just."[1]

Failure to keep Christ's commandments in serious matters deprives the soul of the friendship and grace of God, but even the just while remaining the friends of God sometimes fall into smaller faults. This doctrine is plainly contained in numerous passages of the Old and New Testament. St. Paul in several places gives lists of griev-

[1] Sess. vi. c. 11.

ous sins which exclude those who commit them from the kingdom of heaven.[1] They cause spiritual death, as the same Apostle phrases it elsewhere. On the other hand, we are told that the just man falls seven times, that is often even though he remain just.[2] Every idle word, indeed, must be accounted for, and in many things we all offend, yet we may trust that our heavenly Father does not deal with us more harshly than an earthly father does. An earthly father does not treat a petulant child as if it had tried to take his life.

The essence of a Christian life consists in the love of God and of our neighbor. But this love is not satisfied by mere thoughts and sentiments, however lofty. The ideal must descend to the details of

every day life. If you love Me keep My commandments. Love must show itself in action, in avoiding evil and doing good for God's sake.

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 9; Gal. v. 19; Eph. v. 5, etc.

[2] Prov. xxiv. 16.

Chapter VI: Grace

POOR human nature is in a permanent state of moral bankruptcy. It is incapable of meeting its obligations. It sees the good but it cannot perform it, it constantly does what its conscience condemns. Experience and revelation alike compel us to acknowledge this. But while the Catholic humbly acknowledges his own weakness and sinfulness, yet he knows that through the grace of Christ he can overcome sin. Luther, on the contrary, not only glories in his infirmity, like St. Paul, but boasts of his sinfulness.[1] He holds that human nature is so thoroughly corrupted by the Fall that it is incapable of doing anything good. Sin

[1] J. Verres, "Luther: An Historical Portrait," p. 128.

has become part of its very essence. This natural corruption remains even in the just; it is only by faith that they lay hold of the merits of Christ, and thereby the justice of Christ covers all their sinfulness as with a cloak. Because of their faith, God imputes to them the merits of Christ and turns His eyes away from the innate sinfulness of their hearts. The just accept the freely offered love of God in Christ Jesus, and this is what is called His grace. Luther rejected the Catholic doctrine about grace, and taught that it was nothing more than the freely offered favor of God. Non-Catholics have commonly followed this teaching. The Council of Trent solemnly anathematized it.

"If any one shall say that men are justified either by the mere imputation of the righteousness of Christ, or by the mere forgiveness of sins to the exclusion of grace and charity, which is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and inheres in them; or even that grace by which we are justified is only the favor of God; let him be anathema."[1] Christ He has restored human nature to more than its pristine glory. Let us in merest outline and in non-technical language try to summarize the Catholic doctrine on grace.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent explains this canon in the following terms:

"But grace, as the Council of Trent has decreed, is not only that whereby sins are forgiven, but is also a divine quality inherent in the soul, and, as it were, a certain splendor and light that effaces all the stains of our souls and renders the souls themselves brighter and more beautiful. This is clearly inferred from the sacred Scriptures."[2]

The Catholic Church is quite conscious of the frailty of poor human nature. She knows that if left to itself it cannot hope to escape moral ruin, but she teaches that God never intended to leave human nature to itself. In its first creation He remedied its natural weakness by the gift of His grace, and after the Fall through the grace of

[1] Sess. vi. c. 11.

[2] Loc. cit. pt. ii. c. 2, n. 49.

While instructing the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob, Our Lord gives her the first notions about the doctrine of grace.

"If thou didst know the gift of God," He said, "and who He is that saith to thee: Give Me to drink: thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.... He that shall

drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting."[1]

Grace, then, is preeminently the gift of God, freely bestowed upon us with a view to our sanctification and the obtaining of life everlasting. This gift of God is no other

[1] John iv. 10 ff.

than the gift of Himself appropriated to the Holy Spirit inasmuch as it pertains to the work of our sanctification, and by appropriation the Holy Ghost is the sanctifier. We are taught this by numerous passages in Holy Scripture. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us," says St. Paul.[1] The Holy Spirit is so given to us that He dwells within us as in His temple. "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[2] "Or know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"[3] "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God; as God saith: I will dwell in them and walk among them. And I will be their God, and they shall be

[1] Rom. v. 5.

[2] 1 Cor. iii. 16.

[3] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

my people."[1] God thus dwelling within us, vivifies us, helps us to subdue our fleshly appetites, testifies to us that we are the sons of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.[2]

God is everywhere, and as He creates all things, so He sustains all things and physically concurs with the natural activity of all things. "In Him we live, move, and have our being." By grace in Him we begin to live a new and higher life, we begin to move and have our being in a higher and supernatural order.

So, then, while God dwells within the human soul He is by no means inactive there. He always respects the liberty of His creature, but nevertheless He is always striving to draw the soul into ever closer union with Himself in preparation for that final union which Holy Scripture calls life everlasting. That eternal life consists in

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 16.

[2] Rom. viii. 11 ff.

the knowledge and love of God.[1] We can know God in this life by the natural light of reason, we can know Him still better in this life by the light of His grace, but in life everlasting we shall know Him in a far more perfect way by the light of glory. "We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known."[2] "We are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is."[3]

That final destiny of the human soul is something far above its natural desires, capacities or needs. It is a supernatural destiny, a living on familiar, intimate, and the closest possible terms of a loving son with a most affectionate Father. It has pleased

[1] John xvii. 3.

[2] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

[3] 1 John iii. 2.

God to raise man to that lofty estate, to place man by His side in the divine order of being, permanently raising him above the merely created order. Man must be gradually educated so that when the time comes he may take his place becomingly in the great family of God.

While dwelling in the human soul, God Himself undertakes the education of His child. He does this in the first place by what theologians call actual graces. Those actual graces consist especially of illuminations of the mind and movements of the will. The mind has to be enlightened by God so that it may see and understand and realize divine truths, appreciate their beauty, and realize their desirableness. The will has to be moved by God so that it may actually desire them. Herein man can do nothing of himself; helped by divine grace all that he can do is to give his consent and cooperate with the action of God. "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."[1] "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish according to His good will."[2] be just unless the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated to him, that, however, is done in this justification of the wicked, while by the merit of the same most holy Passion, through the Holy Ghost, the charity of God is poured forth in the hearts of those who are justified, and inheres in them, so that in justification, together with the forgiveness of sins, a man at the same time receives all these infused virtues, faith, hope, and charity, through Jesus Christ in whom he is engrafted."[1] All these Scriptural expressions indicate that grace is something more than the mere extrinsic favor of God. In adopting man for His child by grace and assuring him of a father's love, God works wonderful changes in the human soul. What was before stained by sin becomes clean and pure, what was before darkness becomes light. What was by nature a little less than the angels, is raised by grace in some sort to the level of the deity, it becomes "a partaker of the divine nature," says St. Peter.[1] washes the soul from the stains of sin, it does not merely cover sin, it destroys all traces of it. Of its nature too it does not merely adorn the soul with a heavenly beauty, it makes it fruitful in good works. "Whosoever is born of God committeth not sin; for His seed abideth in him."[1]

By such illuminations of the mind and strength-giving movements of the will God enables the loving soul to do what otherwise it could not do, to keep God's commandments and to avoid grievous sin.

Besides these actual graces the Catholic Church teaches that God gives sanctifying or habitual grace to men.

"Justification," says the Council of Trent, "is not merely the forgiveness of sins, but the sanctification and renovation of the inner man, by the voluntary acceptance of grace and gifts; by which a man instead of being unjust becomes just, and instead of being an enemy becomes a friend, so that he may be an heir according to hope of life everlasting.... For although no one can

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 5.

[2] Phil. ii. 13.

In the same chapter the Council teaches that baptism is the instrumental cause used by God in the justification of the wicked.

By sanctifying grace infused into the soul by baptism we are "born again"; "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." We become a "new creature in Christ Jesus." By this new birth we are made "partakers of the divine nature."[2]

[1] Sess. vi. c. 7.

This is the beginning of that spiritual life which one day is to leap forth into life everlasting. Not alone by actual graces does God preserve the soul of His child from sin and gradually educate it for heaven. There is a radical opposition between sanctifying grace and sin, as radical as that between light and darkness. Mortal sin drives sanctifying grace from the soul, it is the death of the spiritual life. The infusion of grace

[1] 2 Peter i. 4.

[1] 1 John iii. 9.

THE END

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