

EDITORIAL

ONE of the effects, in our fallen state, of the inheritance of original sin is that the integral relationship between soul and body in us is, in certain respects, disturbed and in a sense turned topsy-turvy. Our lower or animal nature with its instinctive appetites, passions, emotions and inclinations is no longer properly geared into our higher or rational nature of mind and will. Original sin is the loss of the supernatural life of grace which bound these elements in our make-up into an integral whole in which the higher exercised its proper control over the lower. The actual sin of Adam and Eve which caused this loss could not have been a sin in which the weakness and frailty of human flesh played any part, as it does in so many of our own actual sins, for no such weakness existed in them. Our first parents, whose human nature was integral, had the lower part of their natures held in a vice-like grip by the perfect functioning of the rational will under the power of grace. The only temptation they could undergo was a direct assault from without upon the free and independent, though finite, self-hood which was theirs in virtue of their rational and immortal souls; a temptation assisted no doubt by diabolical intervention, in the presentation of situations to their imaginations as good and desirable, which were in fact not so, but aimed directly at inducing the free will to defy with deliberate and full intent the known truth of their dependence upon their Creator and their duty of obedience to him and to his law; a temptation, that is, to pride, the setting up of the finite, self-conscious self in opposition to the infinite God. Nowhere I think has this psychological situation been more graphically and dramatically described than by Professor C. S. Lewis in his novel *Perelandra*.

When indeed the primary actual sin of our first parents did in fact take place it was catastrophic in its effects. For the lower self-hood of instinct, emotion, appetite, passion was suddenly liberated by the loss of grace, and the consequent darkening of the mind and debility of the will. The lower nature, good in itself as all God's creation is, took command in many ways, and because this command was inordinate, a function it had neither the right

nor the capacity to exercise, the deterioration of the whole rational make-up of the human race resulted from it. When the fruits of redemption, which could vanquish the damage of original sin, were given to the world by the founding of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church on earth, and by the incorporation into it of human souls in baptism, the right ordering of the rational human economy was restored in power and capacity; man became once more *capax gloriae*, capable of attaining heaven by the obedience to God's law which is love.

But only on condition of the acceptance of the grace offered in all its fullness. Hence it is that traces of the disorder of original sin remain in us and exercise such a powerful influence in our lives. We are not wholly prepared to die and be buried with Christ in baptism in order to rise with him to a complete newness of life. And one of the legacies of original sin that remains with us most persistently is the tendency we have to allow our thought, and consequently our wills, to be dominated and directed by our emotions. Hence the great need of securing that objectivity in our spiritual life which the first article in the present number of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* urges with such point and cogency. Christ our Lord has made ample provision for the securing of this objectivity in the manner in which he has set up the Church, his Mystical Body, and in the measures he has ordained for the perpetuation of its sacramental life.

He has endowed his Church with a teaching authority which can make no mistake in what, by its supreme verdict, it asserts to be the truth which comes from him, since it is safeguarded in this office by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that the members of the Church are dispensed from the necessity of thought by receiving ready-made 'oracles' to all their questions, doubts and difficulties. They must use their own intelligence and will in appropriating to themselves and making their own these truths, enquiring by the use of reason how the ever-growing body of scientific and historical truth can find its proper place as the setting in which we receive the immutable truths of God's revelation, and seeing the intimate connection of one truth with another in its whole content. This is all part of the process of transfer, so to call it, from notional to real apprehension, which must take place by grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit in every person, according to his capacity, be he simple or learned, in

order that faith may reach its full stature. Each member of Christ is thus able to be certain with the certainty of faith of the foundation truths which must be the starting point of this process. Apart from infallibility there can be no such objective certainty, and apart from objective certainty there is no norm for the elimination of subjective and emotional thinking.

In the same way the whole notion of sacramental validity is to provide a secure certainty that when the appropriate ordained signs and words are used the inner effect of grace will follow, provided no personal obstacle of sin or indifference is interposed to prevent it. Thus do sacraments, by their very nature, provide a guarantee, quite apart from emotional feeling, that such grace has actually been given and received.

We are printing in this number, to carry to a further point the idea of the necessity of an objective spirituality, two articles on baptism, the sacrament of initiation; the one doctrinal in its scope, the other liturgical, for it is the study of Christian doctrine and the expression of that doctrine in liturgy that can bring home to us most effectively the full meaning of the redemptive work wrought for us and in us by Christ and mediated to us by his Church. A further article deals with the relation of Christian liturgy to the liturgy of the synagogue thereby emphasizing the objectivity and continuity of worship based upon the inspired Word of God.

In the course of the coming year we hope to print from time to time further articles, on the other sacraments, written from the same two points of view, providing readers of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* by this means with some help in building their own personal lives upon a sound and objective basis of sacramental spirituality.



TOWARDS AN OBJECTIVE SPIRITUAL LIFE¹

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MANY people have a genuine desire for perfection and consistently strive to become better. Apart from the small failings which are inevitable, they keep up a constant and generous effort with a view to their spiritual pro-

¹ Translation by Kathleen Pond of an article which appeared in *La Vie Spirituelle* Sept.-Oct. 1944, since reproduced in pamphlet form by the Procure Generale du Clergé, 3 rue de Mezières, Paris VIe.