

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN*

The central message of the Bible is not a message of sin but of salvation. Our treatment, therefore, of the theme of sin, and especially of original sin, must find its proper context in the whole saving message which the Bible offers. The biblical story of the Fall and the scriptural doctrine of sin grew out of Israel's consciousness of its vocation to be a channel of salvation for all men. The very notion of religion is inseparable from salvation; and salvation is inseparable from the notion of a condition from which man is relieved and to which he is directed. While the "*terminus ad quem*" will not be treated in this paper, it will always constitute the general framework of what we will be saying here.

Biblical theology is not a science in its own right, but an approach under the general heading of theology.¹ It attempts to express, in biblical categories, God's revealed truth. This truth is not found in the material text of the Scriptures alone, but in the whole tradition which the material text reflects and crystalizes.² The biblical theologian, then, must be guided in his task by the tradition which the printed page reflects. For the Catholic, this includes taking into account the understanding the Church has had through the centuries,

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¹ Cf. Frederick J. Cwiekowski, S.S. "Biblical Theology as Historical Theology," *C.B.Q.* XXIV, No. 4 (Oct. 1962) 404-411. The author speaks of a "second domain of theology" which studies and orders revealed truth according to their "genetic ordering." He defines biblical theology as follows: ". . . that part of historical theology which seeks to understand the scriptural doctrine of God and his relation with men and with the world and to express this understanding through and in a synthesis of biblical categories." (p. 408). Cf. also R. A. F. MacKenzie, S.J., "The Concept of Biblical Theology," *CTSA Proceedings* (1955), pp. 48-73; J. McKenzie, S.J. "The Task of Biblical Theology," *The Voice of St. Mary's Seminary* 36 (1959) 7-9, 26-27.

² J. L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1965), p. 360 points out, following Cazelles, that an ancient literary work is "a dialogue between the author and his contemporary society . . . in the ancient world in which literature is anonymous, the speaker or the writer is the voice of his society, which authenticates him by its acceptance."

for the Bible is her Book. The Old Testament is the "permanent crystallization of Christ's and the Church's prehistory" and the New Testament is the Apostolic Church fulfilling her function of being normative for future generations of Christians by reducing to writing her self-conscious awareness of the meaning of the message given to her.³ Since, therefore, he does not come to the Bible in a vacuum, but as a member of a living Church, the biblical theologian first investigates what his Church teaches about Original Sin. In this way he has guidelines to direct his search. Guidelines are not definitive statements, but points from which a fruitful investigation may begin.

Rahner and Vorgrimler summarize Catholic teaching in these words:

The essence of original sin is the absence of grace, or of that supernatural elevation which was originally intended for for man (D 788f.): this "state of privation" really separates man from God (D. 789) and yet is not a personal sin of the individual (D 236), that is, is only to be called "sin" in an analogous sense; it leaves unchanged all that man himself is by nature (D 1055) although the whole concrete man is "wounded" by the consequences of original sin and "weakened" in his natural powers (D 788) . . . original sin must be blotted out before eternal life can be attained (D 791) . . .⁴

When we translate this dogmatic summary into biblical categories, we find that the areas of investigation are: the nature of sin; the corporate dimension of man's personality; the human condition as it is reflected in the Scripture.

³ Cf. K. Rahner, S.J. "Inspiration in the Bible," *Inquiries* (Herder and Herder 1964), pp. 7-96. Excerpts from the "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation" are taken from *The Documents of Vatican II*, published by Guild Press, America Press, Association Press, and Herder and Herder, and copyrighted 1966 by the America Press. Used by permission. In art. 7 the bishops teach the Church's rights in regard to Scripture: "But in order to keep the Gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the apostles left bishops as their successors, handing over their own teaching role to them," and (art. 10) "The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ."

⁴ K. Rahner-H. Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary*, (Herder and Herder, 1965), pp. 330-331.

THE NATURE OF SIN

There is a tendency to begin the analysis of sin with the Yahwist author's account in Gen 2-3. This, however, would be a mistake because it would overlook the aetiological nature of the Paradise story. Actually, it was the whole structure of religious thought "which is reflected throughout the Old Testament (that) formed the atmosphere in which the story of the Garden of Eden and its interpretation of human facts in the light of sin could arise."⁵ Subject to his own peculiar concept of history that a thing "is more perfect as it is closer to its origin,"⁶ the sacred author presented an idyllic picture of what man's life must have been like when he came from the hands of the all-good God. This ideal condition of man certainly existed, because God could not be the source of the sinful state in which man finds himself. But it was short-lived and not directly known. All of man's investigations into his past, both those of the biblical author and the scientist today, must be made in the context of man's fallen state. We look, then, to the general thought of the Bible on the subject of sin.

Hebrew has no word which is the exact equivalent of our English word "sin." All of the Hebrew words which we translate as "sin" originally had a secular connotation.⁷ The basic vocabulary for sin includes the word *heṭ'* or *ḥaṭṭa't* (which the Septuagint renders by ἁμαρτάνω); *'āwōn*; and *peša'*.

The Hebrew root *חטת*, with all of the words built on it, is the main word for sin. The most common noun formed from it is *ḥaṭṭa't*.⁸ The root means "to miss the mark." The word signifies, therefore,

⁵ A.-M. Dubarle, O.P., *The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin* (Herder and Herder, 1964), p. 15.

⁶ M. Flick, S.J. "Theological Problems in Hominization," *Theology Digest*, XIII, no. 2 (Summer, 1965), p. 125.

⁷ Cf. G. Kittel, ἁμαρτάνω, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, translated and edited G. Bromiley, I, (Eerdmans, 1964), p. 269. Cf. also A. Gelin-A. Descamps, *Sin in the Bible* (Descles, 1964), esp. pp. 17 ff.; P. Schoonenberg, S.J. *Man and Sin* (Notre Dame, 1965) esp. pp. 1-7; L. F. Hartman, C.S.S.R., "Sin," *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible* (McGraw Hill, 1963), col. 2218-2231. B. Vawter, C.M., "The Scriptural Meaning of Sin," *Readings in Biblical Morality*, ed. C. Luke Salm, F.S.C. (Prentice-Hall, 1967) pp. 31-36.

⁸ Kittel, *op. cit.*, p. 270 states it is used 289 times and "seems to be strongly preferred to nouns from other roots."

a failure to attain one's goal. The second word *'āwōn* describes the moral aspect of sin. The root means "to be crooked." The word describes the damage that sin does to the sinner. Various metaphors are used to bring out this aspect of sin:—sin is a burden the sinner carries (Gen 4:13; Ps 38:5, Isa 1:4); Judah's sin is cut into its heart like an inscription in stone (Jer 17:1); the sin of Jerusalem is likened to rust which eats into a metal pot (Ezech 24:6). The word may be translated "iniquity." Finally, the word *peša'* designates rebellion. The word does not appear in Genesis. We meet it for the first time in Ex 23:21. The word primarily designates Israel's sin and apostasy as a people.

The Septuagint is not always consistent in translating these Hebrew terms. However, it most frequently renders them by the words *ἀμαρτία* and *ἀνομία*. The presuppositions behind these words are: that there is a goal which can be missed; that there is a Personal Being who sets the goal and whom men reject and against whom they rebel; and that, being responsible, the rebel carries about in himself the damaging consequences of his actions.

The concept of sin, like the other great themes of the Bible, developed slowly under divine guidance. The fact, as we have already indicated, that the words for sin developed out of a secular vocabulary would indicate that the Israelite came to know sin by meditating on the meaning and significance of the vocation God had entrusted to him. When we examine the Paradise account in Gen 3, against the background of the theological development of the notion of sin now accessible to us, we notice that it bears marks of theological development which argue strongly that a knowledge of sin is already highly developed by the time the passage is written, or at least by the time it reaches its final form in the 9th Cent. B.C. We do not find any of the technical language for sin in the Paradise account.⁹ But the whole story is predicated on the fact of sin, the elements of which are already well known to the Yahwist's reader.

One of the first elements we notice in the story of sin in paradise is a rebellious disposition which precedes the sin itself. It is rep-

⁹ The only word which approximates a technical expression is the difficult word *עָוָן*

resented as a desire to possess autonomy, to decide for oneself what will be good or evil.¹⁰ Isaiah (5:20) will develop this notion later: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil. . ." The Bible will characterize this unwillingness to submit to God's decision as being "stiff-necked."¹¹ In Nehemiah 9:29 this condition is described as an unwillingness to bear the "yoke" of God's commandments. Since these were the foundation of the Covenant, the sinner indicates his intention to separate himself from this relationship with God.

A second element which appears in the story of man's Fall is the presence of some power enticing him to sin although he remains free to avoid sinning. Paul will borrow this element in writing to the Romans. In Gen 3, the snake takes advantage of God's command and, misusing it, presents it as a challenge to arouse our First Parents' desire to be like God. The result is their death. In Rom 7:11, Paul writes: ". . . sin took advantage of the commandment to mislead me, and so sin, through that commandment, killed me." It seems clear that the author of the story of man's fall is drawing on his experiences with the phenomenon of sin to explain what must have happened at the very beginning of man's history. The story carries conviction precisely because it is based not on some extraordinary event outside all human experience; but is so linked to man's experience that he can readily recognize his own sinful actions as declarations of independence from God, and can experience for himself the pull of powerful forces in life enticing him to sin. The curses meted out to the principals in the Paradise story relate to conditions of his everyday experience, and explain the pressure of inescapable difficulties as the result of man's having separated himself from God.

¹⁰ X. Leon-Dufour, et al., *Vocabulaire de Theologie Biblique*, (Du Cerf, 1962) col. 775. L. Hartman, C.S.S.R. in "Sin in Paradise," *C.B.Q.* XX (Jan. 1958), p. 33 calls this "a rather forced interpretation." He continues: "For, just as with the tree of life, so also with this tree: it gets its name from its effects." He feels that this interpretation to decide what will be right and wrong would be "the cause that led Adam and Eve to sin, and not the effect." In his article in which he tries to determine the nature of the sin, Hartman's judgment seems correct. But the interpretation is offered here not as an identification of what the sin is "*in se*," but, in the context of Hebrew theology of sin as an indication of a state of mind that exists concomitantly with the "matter" of the sin.

¹¹ Cf. Ex 32:9, 33:3, 5; 34:9, Deut 9:13, 10:16; 31:27; Isa 48:4, Jer 7:26, 17:23; 19:15.

The important points for us to consider, though they by no means exhaust all that the Bible says about sin, are the presuppositions which lie behind the biblical doctrine. The sacred author is certain that the sorry condition of man does not derive from the intention of God. On the contrary, it is exactly opposed to what God desired for man and results from man's prideful rebellion. Therefore, there was a condition from which man fell. Gen 2 affirms that it was a condition of dependence, hence man was given a command. But it was more. It was also a condition of friendship. How long the condition lasted is not affirmed. But man was given a basic option. He failed, being lured on by a power outside himself who, motivated by jealousy, seduced him (Wisdom 2:23). There was also a power (concupiscence) at work within man. Though not sinful in itself, this power becomes the occasion for man's fall.

THE NOTION OF CORPORATE PERSONALITY¹²

Ezech 18:2 (also Jer 31:29-30) gives classical recognition to the Jewish belief in corporate solidarity. He quotes the proverb "The father's have eaten unripe grapes; and the children's teeth are set on edge." The prophet reacts against this notion, and opts for a theology of personal responsibility. But, Ezechiel is late and his remarks presuppose a long history, one that can still be noticed at the beginning of the Christian era (cf. the disciples' question about the man born blind in Jn 9:2 "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind.")

In the progressive development of Jewish retribution theology, it is only gradually that the ancients began to look upon sin as a personal act for which one would be personally punished. The doctrine develops through three stages.¹³ The first is corporate responsibility in this world. Scripture is filled with examples of this: in Genesis we read that Ham is punished and his descendants cursed

¹² J. De Fraine, S.J. *Adam and the Family of Man* (Alba House, 1965); H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 66 (1936) 49-61; G. E. Wright, *The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society* (London, 1954).

¹³ Cf. A. Gelin, *Key Concepts of the Old Testament*, (Sheed and Ward, 1955), pp. 69ff.

because he insulted Noah; (9:25 ff); Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, is rejected because he committed incest (Gen 35:21ff), and Simeon and Levi are rejected because they endangered the tribes by their treachery against the Shechemites (Gen 34:30). In Numbers we read that Korah, Dothan and Abiram were destroyed along with their families because they rebelled against Moses; and Achan and his family were destroyed because he had stolen property that God commanded to be destroyed (16). The child of the adulterous union of David and Bathsheba dies because of his father's sin (2 Sam 12:14). And the punishment of the Babylonian exile is explained, by the prophets, as retribution for the sin of Israel's ancestors. (Jer 16:10-11 says:

When you tell this people all these words and they ask you, "Why has Yahweh decreed this appalling disaster for us? . . ." then you are to answer, "It is because your ancestors abandoned me. . . ."

Many more examples could be added. But these will suffice to prove that the Israelite believed in corporate responsibility. It is not until the post-exilic period, and then under the searching inquiry of Jeremiah and Ezekiel that man's perspective began to change. Perhaps these great prophets were reacting against exiles' irreverent griping against God's providence, or against a fatalistic attitude that threatened to dry up the exiles' religious fervor. (Lamentation 5:7 gives evidence of this danger: "Our fathers have sinned; they are no more, and we ourselves bear the weight of their crimes.") But the later prophets taught a new doctrine. Ezekiel 18:4 (see also 14:12; Jer 31:30) declares "the man who has sinned, he is the one who shall die." And the priests, the guardians of the Law, subscribe to this new teaching and declare: "Fathers may not be put to death for their sons, nor sons for their fathers. Each is to be put to death for his own sin" (Deut 24:16, cf. 2 Kgs 14:6).¹⁴

The Hebrew notion of corporate personality has not been without its critics who have thought of it as a reflection of an underdeveloped mentality which subordinated the individual to the group.¹⁵ No doubt

¹⁴ The Deuteronomic code, ch. 12-26, dates from a period toward the end of the monarchy.

¹⁵ Cf. E. W. Heaton, *The Book of Daniel* (London: Torch Bible Commentary, 1956) p. 242; J. De Fraine, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

the social structure of early nomadic Israel contributed to the notion.¹⁶ But the concept remained an intimate part of Hebrew thinking throughout the whole of its history. It was part of the religious genius of this people.

The concept of corporate personality is a polarized one. It looks now to the group as subsuming the individual into itself; and again it looks to the individual as representing the whole group. This "fluidity" of the concept, i.e. its "continual oscillation or fluctuation between the two poles of the idea: the individual and society"¹⁷ leaves the Western mind somewhat perplexed. But the Hebrew mind passes easily from considering the individual as he develops within the group to the individual as representative of the group. There are many scriptural passages that can illustrate this point. For example, in his last speech, recorded in Deuteronomy, Moses tells the people "You" (plural) "have seen all that Yahweh did . . . in . . . Egypt, . . . the great ordeals your (singular) own eyes witnessed." (Deut 29:1-2). The same easy interchange of singular and plural is seen in Hebrew legislation. H. Cazelles says:

When, in Hebrew law, the individual is designated by the singular [pronoun] "you," he must be considered the leader or representative of the group, rather than an individual in the proper sense.¹⁸

The concept of corporate personality is founded upon the Hebrew's peculiar concepts of history and time. McKenzie points out that "the present moment in biblical thought recapitulates the entire past, at the same time as it contains the entire future."¹⁹ It was in the group in its present predicament that past and future were most completely summed up. The group received its identity through its relationship to its ancestor.

When we consider the biblical references to Adam, we find that

¹⁶ Cf. De Fraine, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹⁷ De Fraine, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹⁸ H. Cazelles, "Loi israélite," *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplement V*, p. 510.

¹⁹ J. L. McKenzie, S.J., "Time," *Dictionary of the Bible* (Bruce, 1965), p. 891.

the term has both a collective and individual connotation. "The individual image is rare, whereas the collective meaning is much more frequent."²⁰ Since the term Adam has different meanings we might expect that the expression "bèn-'adām" would also signify the collectivity of mankind. In fact, it never means an individual descendant of Adam.²¹ De Fraine believes that St. Paul in Rom 5:15 ff. looked upon Adam as a "corporate personality."²² Whether this judgment be accepted without qualification or not, the concept of "corporate personality" must always be the back-drop against which we view the scriptural references to Adam and his sin as the origin of sinfulness in the world.

THE GENESIS ACCOUNT

The story of man's Fall is clearly one of the most important scriptural references to be considered in any treatment of Original Sin. Paul, in his treatment, will refer back to this account in Rom 5:12-19 and 1 Cor 15:22. We must therefore examine the meaning and significance of this story.

It is fully recognized today that, although the two accounts of creation (Gen 1-2:4a; 2:4b ff.) differ, they complement one another in their essential religious teaching. The Priestly author of the first account presents a liturgical picture. Everything proceeds from God in order of dignity with man, the high-priest of creation, coming last. Man is made in the "image-likeness" of God; peace, represented by the vegetarian diet of man and animals, is the whole context of the original creation; man is given all of the forces of nature to exploit and the obligation to worship God, as the Sabbath day and rest indicates. The constant affirmation is that God made all things "good," indeed, "very good."

The Yahwist agrees on the importance of man and his place in God's creation. Like the animals, man is made from the earth. But,

²⁰ Cf. J. De Fraine, *op. cit.*, p. 134ff. He gives references to texts where the term is used in both the collective and the individual sense.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 142. *Herder Correspondence* (Vol. 4, No. 5, May 1967) p. 139 says "Most of De Fraine's book is devoted to showing that monogenism is not the teaching of any text of scripture, in the Old or New Testament."

God refined the earth in making man: Gen 2:7 says God makes man 'âpâr min hâ 'ădâmâh "from the dust of the ground." God breathes the breath of life into man; a reference, no doubt, to man's superiority. Although the biblical authors do express the life principle of animals as coming from the breath of God (Gen 2:19 expressly attributes the words *nepeš hayyâ* to the animals) it is still true that animals are never the result of this double divine action of forming and breathing in the breath of life. In fact, God's breathing is never used in reference to animals.²³ In any case, man's superiority is clearly affirmed in the fact that he can find no helpmate among the animals, and that he imposes names on them. Man has religious obligation, as the Priestly author had asserted, but the Yahwist expresses them—as primitive religions frequently did—in terms of a prohibition. The perfect harmony of creation is taught by the Yahwist's assertion that the couple were naked but unashamed. Clothing was not necessary to protect man against the elements (Gen 2:5 says it had not rained as yet) or against his environment (thorns do not appear till after the Fall, Gen 3:18). But, more importantly, man's dignity, as he came from God, was such that it did not need the aid of adornment, and the man and his wife were completely trustful of one another. It is worth noting that apart from 2 Sam 11:2, the case of David and Bathsheba, the Old Testament never presents nakedness as a cause of sexual excitation.²⁴ Nakedness is viewed as a condition bringing about "shame" or "disgrace." A woman caught in adultery was stripped to shame her;²⁵ prisoners of war were stripped for the same reason.²⁶ Persons seen naked in public were considered to have disgraced themselves.²⁷ Actually, the term used of the nakedness of the man and his wife in Gen 2:25 is a very unique form *lô yitbošāšû*

²³ Cf. R. North, S.J. *Teilhard and the Creation of the Soul* (Bruce, 1967), p. 175 ff.

²⁴ Dan 13:7 ff the three elders were already excited to sin before seeing Susanna naked. Job 31:1, Sir 9:7ff; 25:20; 42:12 give general warnings against looking at women without any special reference to the propriety of their state of dress.

²⁵ Jer 13:36; Ezech 16:37ff; 23:10, 29, 45; Ho 2:5; Nah 3:5.

²⁶ Isa 20:4, 47:3.

²⁷ 1 Sam 19:24; 2 Sam 6:20; 10:4ff; cf. also Gen 9:21; Ex 20:26; 28:45 ff. For further examples, cf. A. M. Dubarle, *op. cit.*, p. 74 ff.

which Joüon suggests should be translated: "they did not consider themselves to be disgraced" rather than the usual "they felt no shame."²⁸ This feature of the Yahwist story is clearly an indication of the perfect harmony that obtained in Paradise before the Fall, as the clothing of man later is a clear reference to the change in his condition brought about by sin.

The authors of these accounts are clearly convinced that an inferior state for man follows upon one that is superior, and that the inferior condition results from man's corruption of God's handiwork. The story of the Fall is not a mere myth describing an inevitable situation. While elements of the story bear an undeniable resemblance to Ancient Near Eastern myths, particularly those of Sumero-Akkadian origin, the Israelite author completely reworked them to convey the religious message he wanted to teach. Nothing in pagan literature is a source for the essential and characteristic elements of this Hebrew story.²⁹ The story itself, while the product of one mind,³⁰ is extraordinarily complex.³¹ John McKenzie concludes that the sacred author, in the construction of his story, drew from diverse sources but fused them into an account all his own. He further concludes that the present form of the Paradise story had no existence before its composition by the Yahwist.³² Fashioning the different

²⁸ P. Joüon, *Biblica* 7 (1927) p. 75. Cf. L. Hartman, *art. cit.*, p. 34. B. Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldean Lexicon* (Harper and Bros., 1956), הִיְחַפְּלוּ is *Hithpal.* fut. 3 person pl. masc.

²⁹ Cf. L. Hartman, *art. cit.*, p. 28; cf. also K. Condon, C.M., "The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin," *The Irish Theological Quarterly* XXXIV (January 1967), p. 23; J. L. McKenzie, S.J. *Myths and Realities: Studies in Biblical Theology* (Bruce, 1963) p. 152 says "It is an accepted conclusion among modern exegetes that there is no extant piece of literature which is the source of the Paradise story."

³⁰ Cf. McKenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 152 "With the majority of exegetes I accept the story in its present form as the work of one mind, and that a mind of no small dimension."

³¹ J. Coppens, *La connaissance du bien et du mal et le péché du Paradis* (Louvain, 1948), p. 69. Cf. McKenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 157 ff for a summary of some of the major attempts to disengage the different strands of narrative believed to be present in the Paradise account.

³² *Op. cit.*, p. 160. Condon, *art. cit.* pp. 24 says: "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that a primitive myth-form lies behind the Yahwist's narrative. A more primitive form of the same genre is to be found in Ezech 28. . ." On this same passage from Ezekiel McKenzie (*op. cit.* pp. 155-156) asks if we can be

motifs of his story as he did the Yahwist gave us a two dimensional picture. He gives his story a universal dimension by addressing himself not so much to what Adam did but to what every man does when he sins; and, he gives his story an historical dimension by placing it at the beginning of a history of his people. He seems to view the Fall less as the origin of all man's sins than "as a first tragic milestone in man's sinful existence."³³

It is a fact that the story of Gen 2-3 plays a small role in the rest of the Old Testament.³⁴ But this fact is not surprising when one considers that the biblical author did not think in the cause-effect categories of the Greek mind—categories which have been widely used in theological descriptions of the doctrine of Original Sin. The Greek notion of cause, since it involves change, is linked closely to the Greek concept of "time."³⁵ According to this concept, all events can be located at proper temporal distances from one another in a cause-effect relationship. This is a chronological world picture, and Original Sin fits into it as the origin and cause of all sin. To the Hebrew, on the other hand, time is not so abstractly considered. Each event, which identifies a particular point in time, is a critical event—it sums up the past and contains the entire future. In this perspective, Original Sin is every sin and Adam, the sinner, is every man sinning.³⁶ Or, perhaps more accurately, the present sinful condition of

sure that this is an older version of the story. The available evidence, he feels, does not allow us to determine which is older. We can only be certain that they both were current.

³³ Condon, *art. cit.*, p. 25. For a description of some of the characteristics of the Yahwist writer see I. Hunt, O.S.B., "The Yahwist," *The Bible Today* No. 29 (March 1967), pp. 2043ff.

³⁴ Direct reference to the sin of our First Parents is made only in Sir 25:23; Wisd 2:24; cf. also Job 15:7ff). Old Testament reference to Paradise as a luxurious garden can be found in Gen 13:10; Isa 51:3; Ezech 31:8ff; Joel 2:3. These garden references, however, could easily have derived from a source independent of Gen 2-3, e.g., from Ezech 28. However, Sir 40:27 seems to demand Gen 2-3 as its source.

³⁵ Cf. the article on "Time" in L. Hartman, *op. cit.* col. 2453 ff; J. L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Bruce, 1965), p. 891ff.

³⁶ Cf. Dubarle, *op. cit.*, p. 55 ff. "For others (opinions of scholars) more recent and at the moment, it seems, more numerous, the story describes the religious experience of every man: he discovers himself to be intelligent, eager for knowledge and at the same time radically separated from God, because he is voluntarily and freely a sinner; each individual, by virtue of a personal

man is already pre-contained in the sin of *ha Adam*, the man. So long as he is faithful, he has life; once he sins, disorder, loss of intimate communion with God, shame, guilt and death enter into his experience. The Israelite knows all this through theological reflection on the vocation God has given to him; he reconstructs these facts of man's beginnings by reason and imagination under the direction of his faith.³⁷

In Genesis 1 to 11 the sacred author shows how the on-rushing tide of sin gradually sweeps over all of man's experience. Having alienated himself from God he alienates himself from his fellow man; his culture becomes a source of alienation; and, finally, on the plane of international relations, he is separated from his fellow man by his inability to communicate with him in a meaningful way. For each of these "original" sins man is punished: he loses paradise; he suffers vendetta; he is destroyed in the flood; and he experiences the confusion of tongues. The genealogies in Gen 5 and 11 tell the same story. They picture the years of man's life decreasing in direct proportion to the increase of his sinfulness. Man has rendered himself less worthy of the gift of life God had given him at the beginning. The teaching of Genesis clearly affirms that what God created is good and what is evil in man's experience is caused by man himself.

The question arises: does the sacred author describe a period of time in which man actually existed on this earth free from biological death and possessing the preternatural gifts? It is dogmatically tenable to hold that man was faced with a choice at the first moment of his existence, and unnecessary to postulate any length of time in a paradise condition.³⁸ It must be assumed, of course, that this choice

decision which is free and at the same time inevitable, is the object of divine anger."

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 60, ". . . the story of the Garden of Eden, and indeed the whole of the early history, issues from Israel's faith by way of mental processes which, in religions less clearly founded on history and without the same knowledge of the true God, resulted in mythical accounts."

³⁸ Cf. C. Peter, "Original Justice," *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (McGraw-Hill, 1967) 774-776. In part, the author states: "The Church, especially by reading and reflecting on His word, came under the inspiration of the Spirit to understand Redemption-justification as restoration to a prior state, at least under certain aspects; hence original justice in its profession of faith." Cf. P. Smulders, *The Design of Teilhard de Chardin* (Newman, 1967) p. 184

was made when man was sufficiently capable of it. Smulders, addressing himself to the condition of innocence in Eden says:

The writer himself gives us to understand in the sacred narrative that his description of the beginnings parallels that of the end. He speaks of the dawn of history in the same fashion as the ultimate consummation and fulfillment of God's plan for mankind, i.e., from the standpoint of Israel's experience of God and man and in motifs borrowed from Israel's life . . . These first pages of the Bible teach that the present state of man—his alienation from God, his concupiscence, his enmity and his death—are no more in accord with the original divine plan than were the discords, division, and humiliation of Israel. They are the consequence of an age-old sin, forever being renewed, whereby man has from the outset been breaking the lifegiving communion with God.³⁹

This, however, is not to assert that the condition of original justice is postulated merely to give the redemptive act of Jesus a context that makes it easier to understand. Genesis is not a mere parable through which religious truths are taught. It intends to report facts as it collects traditional stories and historical memories and arranges them in a connected story. In the construction of his account, the author chose between several forms of his people's traditions and modified these traditions to give them the more historical form we find in the Genesis narrative.⁴⁰ This effort, which gives every evidence of being conscious, surely betrays the author's intention to write history and not mere myth.

"The inference is that there was a 'time' when man was not bent, as yet, under the law of this miserable state. The Bible says nothing about how long this time lasted." Cf. also M. M. Labourdette, *Le Péché originel et les origines de l'homme* (Paris, 1953), p. 174.

³⁹ P. Smulders, *idem*.

⁴⁰ Cf. Ezech 28:12-19 the description of the fall of the King of Tyre. The verses contain reminiscences of the Genesis account but in a far more marvelous form. It is legitimate to conclude that it reflects one form of the tradition of a sin of pride committed by a being in Eden: he walks in glory; his behavior is exemplary from the beginning; he falls; he is excluded from the mountain of God; a guardian cherub is set and he is made "ashes on the ground." See also Job 15:7-8. Dubarle renders the text "Are you the first man that was born? . . . and have you stolen wisdom for yourself?"—seems to be a tradition close to Genesis (*op. cit.*, p. 63).

The author means to convey that an inferior state, a mixture of good and bad, succeeded a state of excellence begun by creation . . . the final compiler's conviction (was) that the world as we know it is not simply inferior to a divine ideal, but comes from an actual corruption of God's work. The story of the Garden of Eden cannot be just a myth describing a normal or inevitable process.⁴¹

The question of the "preternatural gifts" is a thorny one. It is clear that we do not now possess them. Since grace is restored to us without the restoration of these gifts, the question arises: what is their relation to grace? Only two answers seem possible: the first parents had a nature of a different ontological modality than that possessed by men today, an answer modern science seems uncomfortable with; or, secondly, that the gifts will be given to us at the end, an answer that places the whole concept of the gifts in an eschatological dimension and leads to the further question: where they ever actually possessed, or were they what God intended for man if he had not sinned?

With regard to knowledge, the few and rather unsubstantial details of the Genesis narrative give us no compelling reason to postulate any exceptionally developed knowledge in Adam.⁴² The naming of the animals may imply an exercise of intelligence, but it is directed more to showing man's dominion over the animal kingdom (something the Priestly author affirmed by putting man at the end of the creation procession). Indeed, it would seem that the knowledge sought from the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" supposes a certain intellectual potentiality in man not yet realized. It is noteworthy that St. Thomas, in speaking of the possession of knowledge, teaches that it was bestowed on the Angel at his creation but that man "had not yet received this likeness actually but only in potentiality."⁴³

Impassibility is intimately linked with the gift of immortality. On the question of immortality, the first canon of the Sixteenth Council of Carthage (418 A.D.) states:

⁴¹ Dubarle, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 74, cf. also M-J. Lagrange, "L'innocence et le péché," *R.B.* VI (1897) pp. 341-379.

⁴³ S.T. IIa IIae, q. 163, a.2 in translation, Benziger Bros., 1947.

. . . whoever says that Adam, the first man, was created mortal so that, whether he sinned or not, he would have died a bodily death, that is, he would have departed from the body, not as a punishment for sin but by the necessity of his nature: let him be anathema."⁴⁴

Clearly, the supreme punishment of sin is death. But does this concept mean simply biological death so that the necessity of biological death attaches itself to our bodies only after the Fall and on account of the Fall? Perhaps the Bible does not directly refer to this rather speculative question, but contents itself simply with describing death as it is universally experienced by man in the present order of the economy of salvation.

What results from sin is not death as a natural process of dissolution but death as a state of rebellion and alienation from God, that is, death not as biological but as theological.⁴⁵

K. Rahner⁴⁶ assures us that if Adam had not sinned he would not have lived on endlessly in this life, but would have experienced an end which he calls a "death without dying." Maintaining the integrity of his bodily composition, man would have attained that openness to the world which we now expect as the final result of the Redemption—our bodily resurrection. What is interesting here is that Rahner asserts that even in Paradise life would have had an end of some kind and that, therefore, not every aspect of death is a result of sin. If we agree that we are dealing in Genesis, with aetiological history may we not assert that it is the whole complex of death as it is actually experienced that the sacred author has in mind

⁴⁴ Cf. *The Church Teaches*, (Herder, 1955), no. 367; Denz. 101. The history of the interpretation of death as the supreme punishment for sin can be read in W. Goossens, "Immortalité corporelle," *Sup. Dict. Bib.*, Vol. IV, col. 298-313.

⁴⁵ Peter de Rosa, *Christ and Original Sin* (Bruce, 1967), p. 103.

⁴⁶ K. Rahner, *The Theology of Death* (Herder, 1961) p. 42. Cf. C. Geffré, O.P., "Death as Necessity and as Liberty," *Theology Digest*, XII, no. 3 (Autumn, 1964), p. 193 "We may suppose that if Adam had not sinned, he would not, for all that, have led an unending earthly life. But if he had to die, he would not have experienced death as a convulsive doom, but as a transformation, as his passage into the glorious immortality of God. What that might be is expressed by St. Paul: 'We do not wish to be unclothed, but rather clothed over, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life' (2 Cor. 5:4)."

and affirm that it is "sin-laden" death, a returning to dust in the context of alienation from God, that he is actually teaching? Dubarle notes:

The divine sentence contains a phrase in which the dissolution of the body appears as a normal thing: "you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (3:19). This is the consequence of the earthly origin common to man and animals.⁴⁷

It is really the readers' mind which supplies many of the details not explicitly contained in the text. The story contents itself with giving only a general picture of death as we know it:

the brutal end to our life and plans, the obscurity and anguish which accompany it: and it maintains that this fact results equally from a punishment and from our earthly origin.⁴⁸

Would the Scriptures support the notion that death means painful separation from God? L. Hartman says: "As punishment for personal sins death means in many passages (e.g. Prov 1-9) not only the end of all human activity, but also and above all a rejection by God."⁴⁹ The term "life" and "death" are not limited to their physical reality. "Death" becomes an expression for enmity with God. Thus, for example in Deut 30:15-20, in speaking of the "two ways," Moses says:

See, today I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster. If you obey. . . you will live and increase. . . . But if your heart strays . . . you will most certainly perish. . .

Sir 15:18 "Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him." Rom 8:12 "So then, my brothers, there is no necessity for us to obey our unspiritual selves or to live unspiritual lives. If you do live in that way, you are doomed to die; but if by the Spirit you put an end to the misdeeds of the body you will live." The death spoken of in these texts is the death of sin.

Perhaps we can summarize this point.⁵⁰ In his picture of man's

⁴⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁴⁹ L. Hartman, C.S.S.R., *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible* (McGraw-Hill, 1963) col. 535.

⁵⁰ This paragraph will depend heavily on Dubarle, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-237.

beginnings, the sacred author merely suggests—and that with great restraint—the condition of man before the Fall. But he describes with great precision the main outline of man's fallen state. As we attempt to reconstruct the state of man before the Fall, we must be cautious not to succumb to the temptation of imagining that condition as free from the laws of life and the physical world. This includes the phenomenon of death. We have to keep in mind the meaning that the Bible had added to the event of death.

At the beginning of its semantic development there was certainly the idea of corporeal decease; but around this basic meaning crystallized the idea of misfortune, shame and separation from God.

In the light of these added meanings, death takes on the nature of a sinful downfall. This is why the author of Wisdom (1:13) says: "Death was not God's doing."⁵¹ It would seem that we do not have to postulate immunity from death in order to be faithful to the teachings of the Scriptures.

"The magisterium of the Church has made no irrevocable pronouncement on this point." We quoted the canon of the provincial Council of Carthage above. But Pope Sosimus never specifically approved this canon. And, even though Trent quoted another canon from Carthage, it did not use the canon that anathematized those who denied Adam's bodily immortality.⁵²

The gift of integrity or freedom from concupiscence is also listed among the preternatural gifts. Hervé defines concupiscence as a

deordination by which the sensitive appetite, not fully subject to the command of the will, is attracted to illicit sensible

⁵¹ Footnote "1" in the *Jerusalem Bible* (Doubleday, 1966), p. 1007 says: "The author is thinking simultaneously of physical and spiritual death which are interconnected; sin is the cause of death, and physical death for the sinner is also spiritual and eternal death. The thought of the author moves imperceptibly from one to the other. . . . Man by his sin has spoiled the order of the world and introduced the supreme disorder, death, as the negation of God's creative act, cf. Gen 3. But the only real and irreparable death is that of the wicked, that is to say, of those in whom sin is nursed and can continue its fatal work. . . ."

⁵² Dubarle, *op cit.*, p. 235.

goods or to goods which are licit but in a manner that is beyond or against the order of reason.⁵³

Limiting concupiscence to the sensitive appetite, and its act to a striving after its object in opposition to law has its difficulties.⁵⁴ The first derives from what is postulated about the object: either it is *in se* illicit; or, if licit, pursued in an inordinate way. The sensitive appetite, the faculty influenced by the gift of integrity, whose nature it is to be attracted by the appetable object without judging its moral rectitude (the function of the spiritual nature) would clearly be drawn to all objects uniformly. The gift of integrity, then, would be a discontinuous divine intervention in man's life. It would be given only as occasion demanded it. Secondly, placing concupiscence only in the sensitive appetite creates an unnatural dichotomy in man. Given the totality of man's nature, any act of sense cognition must involve his spiritual cognitive faculties also. Splitting the two leads to philosophical problems, and it is clearly untenable from a scriptural point of view. While it is true that Paul pictures the "flesh" and the "law of the members" at war with the "spirit" (cf. Gal 5:17) he is giving a religious description not an anthropology built on a metaphysical stratification of human essence.⁵⁵

In the Old Testament, "desire," "longing" or "craving" (Heb. verb *'iwāh*, *hit' awwāh*, noun *ta' āwāh*) were good or bad depending on the goodness or badness of their objects. Thus the decalogue, in Ex 20:17, forbids coveting a neighbor's possessions. Ps 106:14 seems to know an excessive desire for things that are licit in themselves. But the Old Testament does not know the idea of concupiscence as the cause of sin. This notion appears for the first time in the Jewish apocrypha. In the New Testament, the noun *ἐπιθυμία* and the verb *ἐπιθυμέω* are defined as good or bad depending on the moral worth of

⁵³ J. M. Hervé, *Manual Theologiae Dogmaticae* Vol. II (Berche et Pagis, Paris, 1949), p. 323. "*Concupiscentia intelligitur inordinatio, qua appetitus sensitivus, non plane subjacens imperio voluntatis, vel ad bona sensibilia illicita fertur, vel ad licita, sed praeter aut contra ordinem rationis.*"

⁵⁴ Cf. K. Rahner, "The Theological Concept of Concupiscentia," *Theological Investigations*, I (Helicon, 1961), pp. 350-357.

⁵⁵ Cf. J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 5, SCM Press, 1963).

the object of desire. St. Paul thinks of concupiscence as a power, somewhat neutral in itself, but capable of leading to sin.⁵⁶

The scriptural text used to prove the thesis that our first parents were immune from concupiscence is Gen 2:25: "Now both of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they felt no shame in front of each other." We indicated above the probable meaning of this text, that it signifies a state of mutual trust rather than an absence of inordinate desire. However, it is true that many recent authors have seen something of a sexual nature in the Genesis account of the sin in Paradise. We should look briefly at this question.⁵⁷

There are three arguments that link the sin to sexual activity. The first argument is linked to the notion of immortality. It is noted that the garden is given to Adam alone and no divine promise links it to his descendants. Two trees are also given to him: the one the tree of life; the other the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam may have the first which promises immortality; but not the second. In ancient Hebrew thought, beside the practical benefit derived from off-spring, the Israelite desired children because they gave him a quasi-immortality—he continued to live on in his seed. The two trees, then, represent two opposed ideals: the immortality promised by God; and a quasi-immortality which man would attempt to grasp for himself, and this a mixed blessing consisting of good and evil. The second argument centers on the expression *ṭōb wārā'* (good and evil) in combination with the verb *yāda'* (to know). The combination seems to refer to sexual maturity. In Deut 1:39 the sacred author describes the Israelite "little ones" *ṭappēkem* as "... children of yours who do not yet know good from evil" *b'ēnēkem 'āšer lō'-yād'ū hayyôm ṭōb wārā'*. The same combination appears elsewhere in the Scriptures and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In every instance it seems to connote sexual maturity or its lack. When something else is meant, as, for example in Solomon's prayer in 3 Kgs 3:9 "Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil

⁵⁶ Cf. L. Hartman, *op. cit.*, col. 411-412.

⁵⁷ Cf. L. Hartman, "Sin in Paradise," *C.B.Q.* XX (January, 1958) pp. 26-40. Footnote 2, p. 26-7 lists some of the authors who have written on this subject. My treatment in the next paragraph is an attempt to summarize this excellent article.

...” the combination in Hebrew in *l'hābîn bēn-tôb l'ā'*. The final argument focuses attention on the figure of the serpent. While it had a wider significance, it did include the notion of sex and fertility. The basic idea was that the serpent was a symbol of life. In the Genesis account he offers man a false substitute for what God had intended to give him.

Hartman sums up:

The author wished to explain the presence of moral and physical evil in a world which God had made good as being the result of man's sin. According to the Israelite principle that the ancestor of any group had the characteristic of that group, he made the sin of the first parents of all mankind consist in the basic sin of all mankind as he knew mankind in his day. This sin was *nature worship*, the ascribing to creatures what belongs to God alone . . . Only the Lord can give the true fruit of the tree of life. The serpent, with his hidden, magical knowledge, pretends to be the most cunning (*'ārûm*) of beings, but he leaves naked (*'êrummim*) those who let themselves be seduced by him.

What we have been saying does not lead us to deny the existence of preternatural gifts, but to a different conception of them. Perhaps we may, with K. Rahner, locate these gifts in a new concept of the relationship between nature and person rather than in postulating a different structure for man's nature in the state of original justice.⁵⁸ In Rahner's view, man in possession of the gifts, would have handled his nature differently. While in our present condition the spontaneous movements of our nature are only partially determined by our free will decisions, in the state of innocence these tendencies would have been fully assimilated in all of our free decisions without in any way hindering or obscuring them. The gifts, then, are located not in nature but in grace. It is grace which enables man to grow in union with God, neighbor and the world. The sinfulness of man's present condition has destroyed this directedness and man finds this reflected not only in the alienation of death but the alienation he experiences in regard to objects of his desires. This

⁵⁸ K. Rahner, *op. cit.*, p. 358 ff. Cf. also P. Schoonenberg, *Man and Sin* (Notre Dame, 1965), pp. 184-185.

position seems to recommend itself not only because it adds a more personal dimension to the doctrine of the gifts, but because it avoids assuming a higher form of humanity than is allowed by the humble human beginnings described by science.

In the rest of the Old Testament, only Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom clearly refer to the sin in Eden. Ben Sira exploits the Genesis text as he meditates upon the circumstances of every-day life. However, he does so in such a way that often he merely allows different strains of thought to develop side by side without making any attempt to reconcile them or draw doctrinal conclusions from them. He will, for example, attribute death to the sin of the first woman: "Sin began with a woman, and thanks to her we all must die" (25:24). But he also speaks of death as the natural condition of man: "All that comes from the earth returns to the earth. . ." (40:11); and again "The Lord fashioned man from the earth, to consign him back to it" (17:1). In the lengthy passage in which he celebrates creation (16:22-17:27) the author draws heavily on the early passages of Genesis to celebrate man's greatness, then passes to the giving of the Mosaic law and the end of life. He makes no reference at all to any hereditary punishment. In the passage about the ancestors of Israel (44-50) Ben Sira begins with Enoch and not with Adam. He maintains a consistent silence about the Fall except in the one passage already quoted. Ecclesiasticus speaks of an evil inclination in man, but does not connect it in any way with an original fault. In 37:3 we read: "O evil inclination, why were you created, to cover the earth with deceit?" Dubarle states that

the clearest statement of a congenital perversion of the human heart is to be found in the prophets and the book of Proverbs, in spite of the fact that the classical terms for the further development of this doctrine come from Genesis and Ecclesiasticus.⁵⁹

In his treatment of Original Sin in the book of Wisdom, Dubarle warns against an *eisegesis* (a reading into the text) instead of a proper exegesis of what the text actually contains.⁶⁰ Many authors

⁵⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 109. Works bearing on the topic of Original Sin in Wisdom

have found Original Sin or some of its elements in Wisdom. But it would seem that this judgment is not borne out by the facts. In reality

. . . the book of Wisdom is not aware of the doctrine of original sin, nor even of the doctrine of death, the hereditary penalty for the first sin. (The doctrine of original sin) is not taught, even if it is not excluded.⁶¹

Wisdom is acquainted with the Genesis account of the Fall. In 10:1-2 we read:

The father of the world, the first being to be fashioned, created alone, he had her for his protector and she delivered him from his fault; she gave him the strength to subjugate all things."

What is interesting is that while the author knows of hereditary guilt (in 10:3 ff he speaks of the consequences of the sin of Cain for his descendants) he never attaches this idea to all the sons of Adam. In treating the first man he stresses only the mercy and kindness of God for him.

The Wisdom author has much to say on the subject of death. In 2:23-24 he says:

Yet God did make man imperishable, he made him in the image of his own nature; it was the devil's envy that brought death into the world, as those who are his partners will discover.

These words do not describe a gift given at the beginning and then lost through man's own fault, but an open invitation to man. There is a note of sadness in the words as the author recalls how

are: F. R. Tennant "The Teaching of Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom on the Introduction of Sin and Death," *Journal of Theological Studies* II (1901) pp. 207-223; J.-B. Frey "L'état originel et le chute de l'homme d'après les conceptions juives au temps de Jésus-Christ," *Revue Des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, V (1911) pp. 507-45 (Many articles in dictionaries and reviews depend on this article); J.—Bonservén, *Le judaïsme palestinien au temps de Jésus Christ* II (1935) pp. 12-18. C. Ryder Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Sin* (1953) pp. 87-92.

⁶¹ Cf. Dubarle, *op. cit.*, pp. 116 and 119; J.-B. Frey, *art. cit.*, p. 520. H-Bois, *Les origines de la philosophie judéo-alexandrine* (1890), pp. 276 ff thinks Wisdom denies original sin.

each sinner rejects the divine invitation by his own wicked deeds. In 6:18 he stresses the openness of the still existing invitation "loving her (Wisdom) means keeping her laws, obeying her laws guarantees incorruptibility."

It is remarkable that the Wisdom author does not know anything about bodily immortality. His Greek culture, particularly his Platonic education (though this must not be exaggerated because the author remains "a typical sage of Israel"⁶²) accounts, no doubt, for his attitude toward the body. In 9:15 he teaches ". . . a perishable body presses down the soul, and this tent of clay weighs down the teeming mind." There is no clear evidence in this text that the author considers the difficulty experienced in the exercise of our intellectual faculties a punishment for sin. They seem rather to be the normal condition of man.

Suffering is often considered a punishment for sin in ancient Israel. We may recall that this point of view persisted so that Jesus' disciples could ask of the man born blind: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents . . .?" (Jn 9:2). There was a tendency in the Old Testament to explain all suffering, even that of the innocent, as punishment for sin. However, this limited attitude was gradually recognized (cf. Jer, Ezech, Job) and began to change, in direct proportion to the development of Old Testament retribution theology. But the problem of suffering begins to receive a somewhat satisfactory explanation only in the post-Exilic period, the age of the Wisdom writers.⁶³ Here, as a matter of fact, some forms of suffering appear to be a mark of divine favor. Proverbs (3:11-12) says: "My son, do not scorn correction from Yahweh, do not resent his rebuke; for Yahweh reproves the man he loves, as a father checks a well-beloved son." Wisdom (11:9-11a) presents the same doctrine:

From their ordeals, which were no more than the reproofs of Mercy, they learned what torture a sentence of wrath inflicts on the godless; you tested them indeed, correcting them like a father, but the others you strictly examined, like a severe king who condemns.

⁶² Cf. "Introduction to the Book of Wisdom," *The Jerusalem Bible* (Doubleday, 1966) p. 1004-1005.

⁶³ Cf. L. Hartman, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible*, col. 2340-2341.

Far from considering all suffering a punishment inherited from the first Sinner, Wisdom looks upon the suffering of the just as a salutary act of a merciful God who desires repentance not condemnation.

Wisdom certainly does not deny Original Sin, but it cannot be said to support it either. Throughout the Old Testament one finds various elements that appear to be derived from the story of the Fall. We suggested above that this could probably be explained by the fact that there was already a highly developed theology of sin in Israel from which the Yahwist author drew his picture of sin in Paradise. But, while the elements of a theology of sin influenced the Fall narrative at a very early stage, the reverse is not true. The Fall narrative was slow to influence the later biblical books. We find it in Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom. But even here, while other aspects of the teaching of the early chapters of Genesis are clearly seen,⁶⁴ the doctrine of Original Sin is not (or is not clearly) utilized by the authors of these books.

Job 14 is a classical text thought to contain elements of the doctrine of Original Sin. Yet, in context, this appears, once again, to be *eisegesis* rather than exegesis. Job has its place in the whole development of retribution theology. It is a criticism of the official position in Israelite thought that all suffering is evidence of sin, and all prosperity is an indication of moral rectitude. Job does this criticism in magnificent elegies on the human condition. This text is one of these elegies. When Job says in verse 4 "Who can bring the clean out of the unclean? No man alive!" He is merely using the language of cult to describe the uncleanness of every man before the all-holiness of God.⁶⁵

Psalm 51:4 ff is another classical text in the exposition of the doctrine of Original Sin. It reads:

You are just when you pass sentence on me, blameless when

⁶⁴ E.g. marriage (Tob 8:6; Eccles 36:26; Gen 2:18); man the image of God (Eccles 17:3; Wisd 2:23; Gen 1:27); man's dominion over creation (Eccles 17:2-4; Wisd 9:3; 10:2; Gen 1:28); connection of sin and death (Eccles 25:24; Wisd 2:24; Gen 2:17; 3:22); earthly origin and bodily dissolution (Eccles 17:1, 40:11; Wisd 7:1; Gen 3:19). Cf. Dubarle on this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 121 ff.

⁶⁵ Cf. K. Condon, *art. cit.*, p. 27.

you give judgment. You know I was born guilty, a sinner from the moment of conception.

There is an intense awareness, here of the religious dimension of sin. But rather than indicate a guilt inherited through conception (there would be no parallel for this notion in the rest of the Old Testament) the psalmist would seem to be pleading that since he has been born into a fragile existence, a circumstance he sees as mitigating his guilt, God should take this into account when He renders judgment. There is a parallel for this interpretation in 2 Kgs 8:46.

In the light of all that has been said, we may conclude that the doctrine of Original Sin, as we know it in the teachings of the Church, is no where clearly taught in the Old Testament. John McKenzie expresses it in this way:

The historical origin of sin is really the question of original sin, and this in turn resolves itself ultimately into the question of how sin can enter a universe governed by the saving power and will of God. To this mystery the Old Testament offers no solution; indeed it is more accurate to say that it does not consider the mystery.⁶⁶

The inter-Testamental period offers an extremely complex picture, but one that more closely parallels the Catholic doctrine of Original Sin.⁶⁷ The sources are rabbinic writings, apocalyptic works and the Dead Sea Scrolls. On the origin of sin, these sources do not agree. The Ethiopic book of Henoch and the Book of Jubilees give Gen 6:1-4, the Yahwistic story of the intermarriage of the sons of God and the daughters of men, as the origin of evil; the Apocalypse of Moses traces the sin back to Eve; and, Fourth Esdras and the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch trace it back to Adam.

As there was no unanimity on the origin of the sin so there is no agreement on what the Fall entails. The Rabbis do not seem to have postulated any change in man's fallen nature. They teach that his *yeşer*, inclination or imagination, is indifferently good or evil. The

⁶⁶ J. McKenzie. *Dictionary of the Bible*, (Bruce, 1965) pp. 818-819. Cf. K. Rahner—H. Vorgrimler, *op. cit.*, pp. 329; L. Hartman, *op. cit.*, Col. 1677-1678.

⁶⁷ Cf. the summary treatment by K. Condon, *art. cit.*, pp. 27-30.

Sifre on Deuteronomy 11:18 ("Let these words of mine remain in your heart and in your soul; fasten them on your hand as a sign and on your forehead as a circlet") says that God created man with an evil impulse, but that He also gave him the Law as a means of saving himself. The apocalyptic writers are somewhat gloomier. Here, Fourth Esdras is most interesting because it was well known to the Latin Fathers since it was incorporated, in Latin translation, as an appendix to Vulgate. In 4:30 ff we get the impression that man's *yešer ha ra'*, evil inclination, was created in his heart, "For a grain of evil seed was sown in Adam's heart from the beginning, and how much impiety has it produced until now and how much will it generate until the threshing." Then, in interesting parallel to Rom 5:15, the text continues:

But estimate among yourselves if a grain of evil seed has generated so much fruit of impiety: when the ears of good grain, which cannot be numbered, are cut down, how great must the threshing floor be that will receive them?⁶⁸

The text seems to imply a weakened nature. In 3:26 we are told that the evil heart has grown in each of us showing us the path to estrangement and death; and in 7:48 we read an apostrophe to Adam whose fall was not his alone but ours also.

The covenanters at Qumran also knew of the universal sinfulness of all men. But their doctrine, as presented in the *Manual of Discipline*,⁶⁹ evidences a marked dualism: God appointing two spirits for man: the one truth, the other wickedness. All of man's difficulties are due to the malevolence of the angel of Darkness. The path to salvation lies, as the Rabbis had taught, in the observance of the Law but also in membership in the Community.

The witness to Original Sin from the inter-Testamental period

⁶⁸ 4th Esd 4:30-32: *Quoniam gramen seminis mali seminatum est in corde Adam ab initio: et quantum impietatis generavit usque nunc, et generat usque cum veniat area? Aestima autem apud te gramen mali seminis, quantum fructum impietatis generavit: Quando secatae fuerint spicae, quarum non est numerus, quam magnam aream incipient facere? (Biblia Sacra, Tornaci, 1881, appendix, p. 12).*

⁶⁹ Cf. T. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, (Doubleday Anchor, 1956), pp. 43-44.

is still somewhat unclear. The connection between the general sinfulness of mankind and the sin of a first parent is still indistinct.⁷⁰

Paul called the Old Testament the pedagogue unto Christ. The same, with reservation, can be said for the influence of the inter-Testamental writers, the major influence being that of the apocalyp- tists. Among the New Testament books, the Gospels do not contain a systematic treatment of man's condition at his origin, but they do contain allusions that yield profitable insights for the development of our material; and there are clear references to the Genesis narrative in Mt 19:4-5 (and parallel passage Mk 10:6-9); and Jn 8:44.

In Matthew's treatment of the subject of divorce there is a quotation of Gen 1:27 and 2:24. The allusion to the story of man's origin cannot be mistaken. But of even greater significance is the context into which this allusion is set. Jesus forbids divorce and is immediately challenged by the Pharisees with the authority of Moses. Jesus' answer is significant: "It was because you were so unteachable," he said, "that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like this from the beginning." (19:2). Jesus goes on to teach that it must not be like this in the future. The point of contrast is not on the level of law but condition; and the explanation for the situation to which the Pharisees appeal is not a weakness in Moses but the unteachable disposition of men. Indirectly Jesus affirms that this unteachableness was not man's primitive condition. The Law of Moses, viewed against the background of Paul's theology, could not give the means of carrying out its precepts. That Law, therefore, had to be tolerant of man's weakness. The grace of Christ adds a new dimension to this picture. It invites man to return to his previous condition of moral rectitude. We may recall that the theme of a restoration of the Paradise condition in the Messianic age is to be found in Is 11:8ff. Dubarle says:

This passage, [then] suggests the idea of salvation as the re- establishment of an original innocence. It is a prelude to Paul's doctrine of the two Adams, for which it might be the source.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Cf. L. Hartman, *op. cit.*, Col. 1678.

⁷¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

However, it must be noted that the origin of man's unteachableness is not identified. The only thing the Synoptic tradition tells us is that an original state of innocence is being restored in Christ. The eschatological age has already begun.

The altercation between Jesus and the Jews recorded by John (8:39 ff) has a bearing on our theme because it contains references to the Genesis narrative. Jews claimed Abraham for their father. Jesus retorted that the true children of Abraham would not be seeking to put Him to death. He then tells them:

The devil in your father, and you prefer to do what your father wants. He was a murderer from the start; he was never grounded in truth; there is no truth in him at all: when he lies he is drawing on his own store, because he is a liar, and the father of lies (8:44).

Like Wisd 2:24, these words of Jesus clearly refer to the temptation scene in Gen 3. The remarkable thing is that the parentage of the sinful Jews (clearly John is not condemning all Jews here) is identified as the devil, the tempter, and not the first human couple. The idea of a supra-human cause of man's sin makes its appearance in the Apostolic catechesis before John. The Matthean tradition was also aware of an extra-human cause of sin as is evident in the recording of the parable of the enemy who sowed weeds along with the good grain (Mt 13:24-30 and its explanation 36-43). The parallel between the Matthean tradition and Jn 8 is most striking when we read in Mt 13:38 "the darnel (are) the subjects [lit. the children] of the evil one." The message seems clear enough: the state of innocence is lost because of man's hardness of heart (as we saw in the Synoptic tradition). Moreover, this condition is a congenital one, as the figure of parentage in John would suggest; but the parentage is not identified within the human family and seems to depend upon the individual's personal choice in performing the works of his father, the devil. It also seems certain, from the context, that there is no intended connection between sin and bodily death. In Jn 8:51 when Jesus says: "I tell you solemnly, whoever keeps my word will never see death," He is not promising exemption from physical death but from spiritual death. Jesus never speaks of one being afraid of physical death only of a death that entails alienation from God: (Lk 12:4-5)

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. I will tell you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has the power to cast into hell.

John teaches that a man must be "born from above" (3:3) and "born through water and the Spirit" (3:5) in order to see or to enter the kingdom of God. The general theme of this passage is non-sacramental and has to do with the outpouring of God's spirit in the eschatological age which dawns with the coming of the Messiah.⁷² Nicodemus would understand this theme which is frequent in the Old Testament (cf. Jn 3:1-5). But, 15:5 is clearly a sacramental reference and authentic.⁷³ It speaks of man being born into a natural state which is insufficient for entrance into the Kingdom of God. He must come out of this state through a rebirth by means of a washing. It is not merely a question of receiving a gift that exceeds the natural condition, but of being cleansed from some condition of uncleanness. Against the background of Ezech 36:25-27:

I will pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols: I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you: I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you and make you keep my laws and sincerely respect my observances.

we may conclude that ". . . it is not arbitrary to see in this passage the assertion that carnal man, born of the flesh and still deprived of the Spirit, is tainted by an uncleanness."⁷⁴

A brief return to the consideration of the parable of the weeds will allow us to conclude this section of our remarks.⁷⁵ The amazement of the owner's servants in finding weeds growing with the wheat forced them to seek an explanation from their master. So also, the presence of evil in a world which depends for its existence upon the

⁷² Cf. treatment of this passage by R. Brown, S.S., *New Testament Essays* (Bruce, 1965), pp. 92-95.

⁷³ R. Bultmann, *Des Evangelium des Johannes* 16 ed. (Göttingen, 1959) p. 98, no. 2 attributes it to an "ecclesiastical redactor" but see R. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 93 and A. M. Dubarle, *op. cit.*, p. 129, n. 1.

⁷⁴ Dubarle, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁷⁵ See the treatment of this parable in Dubarle, *Ibid.*, p. 132, 139-141.

creative activity of an all-good God demands explanation. In both cases, the explanation is the same: "Some enemy has done this." But of great interest is the further fact that the coexistence of good and evil is irrevocable until the end when the ripening of each will permit the destruction of evil. In practice, the ancient farmer would have uprooted the darnel before the harvest and this more than once.⁷⁶ It seems legitimate to see in this element of the parable's teaching that the weeds and wheat be allowed to grow together, the fact that man is to live his life in a hostile environment. It is not entirely one of his own making, but one to which he must respond. If he bears fruit, like the wheat, he will be gathered to glory; if his fruit is evil, he will be destroyed.

St. Paul will utilize the suggestions scattered through the Gospels, and draw out the implication of the teaching of the Old Testament. Clearly, the most significant text in St. Paul on the doctrine of Original Sin, is to be found in Rom 5:12-21.⁷⁷ But the text is not isolated. It is situated in a context which we suggested above was a development of the insight of the author of Fourth Esdras: where evil abounded, grace will abound even more. The immediate context of Paul in his wonderment over the fact that Christ died for us when we were sinners; and the confidence he derives from this fact leads him to affirm that since we have been reconciled we can now count on salvation through Christ (Rom 5:1-11). The theme of the universality of sin and the universality of Christ's saving act is set out by Paul in beautifully balanced parallel texts: Rom 5:12-14; 18-19 which describe the disobedience of the one man; and Rom 5:15-17; 20-21 which describe salvation through Christ.

Being a Jew, it is only natural for Paul to view man's condition and salvation within the context of history. In his treatment of the

⁷⁶ Cf. J. C. Fenton, *St. Matthew* (The Pelican Gospel Commentaries, Penguin Books, 1963), p. 221.

⁷⁷ A. M. Dubarle, *op. cit.*, p. 142 ff; K. Condon, *art. cit.*, p. 31ff; S. Lyonnet, S.J. *Quaestiones in Epistolam ad Romanos* (Pontificio Instituto Biblico, Rome, 1955), "Saint Paul: Liberty and Law" *Theology Digest* XI (Spring, 1963), p. 12 ff, "Original Sin and Romans 5:12-14," *Theology Digest* V (Winter 1957) p. 54 ff, "Le sens de *eph ho* en Rom 5:12 et l'exégèse des Pères grecs" *Biblica* 36 (1955) 436-456 (a brief digest in *Theology Digest*, Winter, 1957, p. 63). P. Schoonenberg, S.J., *Man and Sin* (Notre Dame, 1965) p. 129 ff.

problem of sin he takes his position in opposition to the teaching of the Rabbis that salvation comes through the observance of the Law. If that were the case, the gentiles would be excluded from salvation and the Jews automatically saved. But in Rom 1-2, Paul speaks of God's invitation to the gentile world, revealing Himself through visible creation. The gentiles remained open only to a point and their moral corruption is the result of their doctrinal error. Likewise the Jew failed to live the dictates of the Law and God has been blasphemed among the pagans because of them. Sin is a reality, and there is no possibility of being extricated from this sinful condition except through the saving activity of Christ.

No passage in St. Paul is more difficult than this one. Paul seems, himself, to be groping for a way to express his thoughts. He is, perhaps, meditating on the tremendous import of the teaching of 3:23.

Both Jew and pagan sinned and forfeited God's glory, and both are justified through the free gift of his grace by being redeemed in Christ Jesus who was appointed by God to sacrifice his life so as to win reconciliation through faith.

The main point of Paul's message in 5:12-21 is to emphasize the superabundant gift of God in Christ over all sin, original and personal, howsoever numerous and grave those sins might be. Everything then is subordinated to this point. Among these secondary items, two that seem clearly contained in this passage are: first, that Paul, in contrast with his contemporaries, thinks that Adam's sin produced not only a penalty but an actual state of sin; and secondly, he probably believed that man dies on account of Adam's sin. Whether this is a presupposition of Paul or something he intends to teach we will discuss later.⁷⁸

Among the many difficulties inherent in this text, one that deserves special mention is the meaning of the expression $\xi\varphi'\tilde{\theta}$ in verse 12. Rom 5:12 reads:

Well then, sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned ($\xi\varphi'\tilde{\theta}$ πάντες ἥμαρτον).

⁷⁸ Cf. Dubarle, p. 147; K. Condon, *art. cit.*, in speaking about the causal link between Adam's and mankind's sins reminds us that Paul does not specify what this link is.

The difficulty stems from one's understanding of the phrase ἐφ' ᾧ. Does it mean, as the Latin Fathers thought, "*in quo omnes peccaverunt*," that all have sinned in Adam. Or does it mean, as the Greek Fathers teach, that all men have ratified the sin of Adam with their own personal sins.

If this whole passage is an extended meditation on 3:23, as was suggested above, i.e., that men share in Adam's sin by their own personal sins, then it would seem necessary to opt for the interpretation of the Greek Fathers as reflecting the thought of St. Paul. Lyonnet suggests that the translation ought to be "on condition that." He sees this as having the advantage of indicating that man's sins are a real but subordinate cause of his fallen condition and it retains the primacy of Adam's sin in explaining sin in the world.⁷⁹ He explains that the expression often appears in treaties between victor and vanquished. The victor will remove his armies "on condition that" an indemnity be paid. The primary cause of the removal of the armies is the treaty, the real but dependent cause is the payment. This dependent cause is introduced by ἐφ' ᾧ and followed by the infinitive or

⁷⁹ S. Lyonnet, S. J. "Le sens de ἐφ' ᾧ en Rom 5:12 et l'exégèse des Pères grecs," *Biblica* 36 (1955) p. 456. In his *Quaestiones in Epistolam ad Romanos* (Roma: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1955), pp. 228-231, Lyonnet states that of all the interpretations offered only "*in quo*" is philologically impossible. For his own point of view he says: "*Porro cum contexta Rom 5, 12 duplex significatio possibilis locutionis magis congruere videtur: sive: introducit aliquam consequentiam illices miserae conditiones in quam incidit genus humanum propter Adae peccatum, tunc "propter quod" vel "propter quam mortem". Utique talis interpretatio duntaxat quadrat cum acceptione mortis quam dedimus. Ita Zahn.*

sive: introducit conditionem aliquam qua impleta mors (aeterna) in omnes homines pertransiit; tunc verti potest "mediante facto quod." In hoc interpretatione admittitur vera causalitas peccatorum actualium, sed causalitas secunda relate ad causalitatem peccati Adae eique subordinata: ipsa enim peccato actualia a peccato. Adae eiusque sequelis pendere censentur. Ita, saltem quoad sensum generalem, ut videtur, v.g. Cyrillus Alex." (pp. 230-231). J. De Fraine, *Adam and the Family of Man*, p. 144 note 53 "The 'mystical' interpretation of the words '*in quo omnes peccaverunt*' of Rom 5:12 is generally known. This exegesis of the Latin fathers (St. Augustine) takes into account only the Vulgate (the words *εφ' ᾧ* of the original Greek text are a simple conjunction: 'since'); this exegesis presupposes a Platonic viewpoint which looks upon Adam as a universal idea of which individual men are the participation. We might well wonder whether the Platonic 'idea' is not the philosophical elaboration of the more down-to-earth and less theoretical idea of 'corporate personality.'"

future indicative if the condition is still to be fulfilled; but, and this is the case in our text, it is followed by the aorist if the condition has been met. Accordingly, the text would mean that death has come upon all men primarily because of Adam's sin but also in a real but dependent sense because man has fulfilled the condition that makes him liable to death through his own sins.

Paul views the entrance of sin and death into the world through the prism of Wisd 2:24 from which he borrows the expression "entered the world" (εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσηλωθεῖν). Wisdom identified the devil as the source of death. Paul says that death "entered the world" through sin, and attributes the sin to Adam. Thus two roles emerge under the name of Adam in Rom 5:12-14: he is the cosmical man who is the gateway through which sin and death enter the world; and he is chronologically the first man: for death reigned from Adam to Moses. This rather interestingly parallels Genesis where Adam is both Man in general and an individual man.

How does death reign over all men even though their sin is not a transgression like that of Adam? This is a question that divides exegetes. One opinion is that the domination of death during the period from Adam to Moses, when there were no personal sins, is, in Paul's mind, proof that all have actually sinned in Adam. Schoonenberg sums up the arguments offered:

these exegetes attribute to Paul one of the two following ways of arguing: without the Law personal sins are *simply not accountable*; they are not considered as subjective sins. Yet people died. This points to original sin; Or; without the Law personal sins are not accountable *unto death* (only the prohibition in paradise and the Mosaic Law establish death as punishment for sins). Yet people die; that points to original sin.⁸⁰

This opinion suffers the defect of considering "death" only as physical death. Such is not Paul's habit and, as we have seen, is without precedent in the rest of the Scriptures. It also suffers the defect of basing itself on principles that Paul could never grant, namely, that from Adam to Moses personal sins were not held to be

⁸⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

accountable. In Genesis, personal sins were punished by God, in the Flood, in the shortening of man's life, in the destruction of the sinful cities. And Paul himself in Rom 1:18ff claimed the pagans are not to be excused for their sins. In Rom 2:12-14 he taught that there is always a law—at least the inner law of conscience. Moreover, the death penalty in the case of the Flood and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah entailed—in the thought of the New Testament authors—much more than mere physical death (cf. 1 Pet 3:19; Jude 7). Granting, then, the accountability of personal sins from Adam to Moses—vs 13 says: "Sin (without the definite article) was in the world long before the Law was given"—we may conclude that Paul means that sin's power, which entered the world through Adam, does, in fact, bring eternal death through man's acquiescence to Adam's sin by his own personal sins. Paul goes on: "There was no law so no one could be accused of the sin of 'lawbreaking' . . ." One is inclined to say with Bultmann that this sentence is completely unintelligible.⁸¹ But perhaps we can connect this verse with 4:15 and see it as an objection the Apostle sets up in order to answer it in the following verse. The objection would be that where there is no transgression there is no formal sin which would merit death since death acquires its power to "kill" from the transgression of law, as Paul says in 1 Cor 15:56. Therefore, before the law, sin had no power and death was lacking its sting. Paul solves the objection immediately:

yet death reigned over all men from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law.

In the light of Rom 2:12-14, those who do not have a law "but are led by reason to do what the Law commands, may not actually 'possess' the Law, but they can be said to 'be' the Law." Paul's answer is, then, that there is no time when law does not exist. And the fact of death proves that starting with Adam sin and death have inun-

⁸¹ R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, (Scribners, 1951), p. 252.

dated the world to the extent that men have agreed to them through their own personal sins.

Vs. 13-14 seem to be a long parenthesis. In vs. 15, without using the usual formula *καὶ οὕτως*, Paul returns to the parallel he introduced in verse 12. "Adam prefigured the One to come . . ." And here Paul gets back to the main issue, the superior power of Christ's saving act. Paul continues: "but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall."⁸² The significance of this typology is the fact that the type is not known except in the antitype. Adam's place in man's need for salvation cannot be understood apart from Christ's more eminent place in man's salvation (for the type is inferior to the antitype—cf. 1 Cor 10:6 ff.). The type is intended by God only in relationship to the antitype. Therefore man's solidarity with Adam in death is intended only in relation to man's solidarity with Christ in salvation. And, since the type is much inferior to the antitype, man's solidarity with Adam is much inferior to his solidarity to Christ.⁸³ Therefore, there can be no contradiction in seeing man's personal sin as contributing to the condition inherited from Adam, in virtue of which he is condemned; and, on the other hand, seeing the gift of Christ coming, as Paul teaches, as a free gift from God, given to man when he was in sin and, therefore, without his cooperation.

It is objected that this interpretation does not leave room for the situation of children who have not yet attained maturity. Lyonnet says that it is rightly held by exegetes today that Paul is not thinking of children throughout this passage.⁸⁴ That Paul was aware of their need for salvation can be examined in works which treat of infant-baptism.⁸⁵

Rom 5 clearly teaches the spread of sin from one man to all men. Is this a new revelation? Authors differ in answering this question: J. Guillet thinks that it is; Dubarle says that it is an explicitation of what is already implicit.⁸⁶ But Paul teaches an objective separation

⁸² Dubarle, *op. cit.*, p. 149, does not see the apodosis until verse 18 and 19. We follow Lyonnet and *The Jerusalem Bible*, p. 275 note k.

⁸³ Cf. Lyonnet, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

⁸⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 234.

⁸⁵ See, e.g., O. Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament* (SCM Press 1958); J. Jeremias, *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries* (Westminster, 1962).

⁸⁶ See reference in Dubarle, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

of man from God. This alienation reveals itself in human conduct and is traceable throughout history all the way back to man's origins. But the situation is not hopeless. For, where sin abounded, grace, through Christ, superabounded. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous." (vs. 19).

1 Cor 15:20-57 invites our attention because it too presents us with the antithesis between Adam and Christ. This time, however, the subject is death. When treating the subject of death in Paul, it is frequently difficult to know his precise meaning: it could be physical death or spiritual death; death now or an eschatological death. Sometimes the meaning will be obvious, but often the Apostle's thought will admit of more than one meaning.⁸⁷ This is evident in our present text. In vs. 21-22 death is presented as something abnormal; in vs. 26 death is called an enemy, indeed, the last enemy for Christ to overcome; and in vs. 56 death is said to have a sting which is sin. But, between the earlier and later verses, death appears as a quite normal thing. When it is followed by resurrection, it resembles the seed which John (12:24) told us, as Paul does here, must die to bear fruit. And, the fruit it bears is far more magnificent than the seed planted "the thing that is sown is perishable but what is raised is imperishable" (vs. 42). Paul even has a secret to tell us "we are not all going to die, but we shall all be changed" (vs. 51). Paul is clear in teaching that there is a significant difference in the bodies we now possess and the bodies we will possess at the Resurrection. But he also seems convinced that our present state is not essentially different from what it was at the beginning, though somewhat deformed through sin. It would seem to be forcing the text to say that man was created not to die. But it would be clearly the thought of St. Paul to say that death takes on a new significance under the impact of sin. We said above that Paul probably believed that man dies on account of Adam's sin. This sentence seems to mean that while Paul may have considered bodily death a natural experi-

⁸⁷ On the subjects of life and death in Paul see J. Nelis, "L'antithèse littéraire ΖΩΗ—ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ dans les épîtres pauliniennes," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* XX (1943) pp. 18-53.

ence (his attitude on this is obscure) he clearly believed that the death that involves alienation is the result of Adam's sin and all sin. It is its alienating influence that makes sin the sting of death.

The Bible is the story of God's intention to save mankind. But to speak of salvation implies a need for salvation. Over and over again, through examples drawn from history, the sacred author tells us how man, left to himself, gets deeper and deeper into sin. But God constantly intervenes in man's history: sometimes to administer corrective punishment; and sometimes to heal man's wounds. Finally, he sends his Son through Whose life, death and resurrection all men are saved. This is the essential doctrinal affirmation of the Scriptures.

But the Bible also theologizes. It speculates about the origin of sin and its consequences for man. Following the development of the scriptural writers we have come to see that Original Sin is a real and tragic situation. It is a "moral and religious perversion in which every man finds himself inevitably plunged by reason of his birth into a perverted environment."⁸⁸ The solidarity of the whole race in sin is not merely the sum total of all personal sins, but a state of privation in which man cannot respond to God's call until he has been healed.

In examining the doctrine of the scriptures, the Catholic exegete must be consciously aware of three rules, and do justice to each. First, he must meet the sacred writer on his own ground and read him against the background of his own culture and literary traditions. Failing this, the reader runs the risk of imposing on the sacred author questions and problems he never knew. Secondly, the exegete must remember that the Bible belongs to the Church. Therefore, he must interpret it using the 'analogy of faith' to discover its meaning within the whole context of Revelation. Here he must remember that the doctrinal statements of the Church are limited and historically conditioned. This invites him to read the magisterial statements in their own proper context. This gives no license to change what is irreformable simply because its envelope of expression belongs to another era, but creates the responsibility to know the Church's mind that he might think with the Church. Finally, the exegete is a

⁸⁸ Dubarle, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

man of his own day and he must take into account the cultural and scientific climate which he shares with his contemporaries. But herein lies a danger. The exegete must beware of falling prey to a kind of neo-Concordism which always remains a temptation to man in his attempt to be modern. He must remember that, in the final analysis, the Church's doctrines are supported by her own self-conscious awareness, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, of what is compatible with her own true nature, and not by the arguments drawn from the cultural milieu through which she attempts to address her message to the world.

In the hope that we have followed these three rules, we conclude by affirming that all that the Church has taught as essential to the doctrine of Original Sin is solidly based on Scripture. The theological elaboration of that doctrine remains open and challenging.

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