

garet from other saints, I have shown only the smoke that betrays the fire. Of that inner sanctuary where it burns, Margaret has left no key in the shape of spiritual journal or mystical treatises. We only know that it was not her penances, her long fasts and vigils, her ecstasies, prophecies and miracles that make her a saint, but that love of God which prevented even the sharpest sufferings distracting her from Him, but made everything in her life its fuel. The difference between the saints and ourselves is in our love; and love may be had for the asking, if only we are willing to give *all* the substance of our house.

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## A TREATISE ON THE INEFFABLE MYSTERY OF OUR REDEMPTION

BY

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(*Translation by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey*)

CHAPTER III (*continued*)

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*The doctrine of original sin shows the need of the remedy of our Saviour's Incarnation and Passion.*

The doctrine of original sin and the consequent corruption of human nature it entailed is fundamental for understanding the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God and our need of that remedy. It should be noted that Divine Providence has made use of two remedies for man's sanctification—one is contained in the law of nature, the other in Holy Scripture; for by the former law the knowledge of good and evil is imprinted in men's hearts with the decree that they should practice the first and hate the other. He also gave them a natural love and reverence for God resembling that of children for their father. Besides this natural interior inclination there is one that is exterior, for the sun, the moon, the stars, the beauty of the movements of the heavens, the changes of the seasons, the development of things, and finally all creatures say: "God made me." The animals, with the perfection of their bodies and the instincts God bestowed upon them for their preservation, especially incite us to this love and reverence (cf. St. Augustine, *Confessions* X).

The result of the natural law was that although some men were just and holy, the universal punishment of the flood shows how small was their number compared with that of the wicked.

After this law, our Lord provided a more efficacious remedy by means of Holy Scripture. He descended to Mount Sinai and gave laws written by the finger of God. The children of Israel were astounded at the majesty and pomp of His presence and His

threats of punishment and promises of blessings. And although there were a greater number of righteous men than under the law of nature, yet the people transgressed so shamefully by their vices and idolatry that the ten tribes as well as the remaining two were punished by severe captivity, showing how little these two remedies afforded by Providence availed to reform the human race, corrupted as it was by the evil root of original sin.

But many volumes would not suffice to describe how profound was the corruption and evil wrought by this sin, not only in our bodies but much more in our souls. Yet it is enough to look at the whole world, not only at pagan and faithless lands, where men follow their carnal desires like animals, but at Christian countries too, which have the Faith, Sacraments, doctrine and knowledge of the other life and adore a God who died to slay sin and drive it from the world. Yet there will be found such multitudes of wicked men that in each place the number of those who fear God can be counted on the fingers. The rest of them care only for the present day, for the things of this life, and bodily pleasures, regardless of God, the salvation of their souls and the future life. As Solomon said, "The number of fools is infinite" (Eccles. 1, 15).

This shows how keen and mortal was this evil of mankind, and how strong a medicine was needed to cure so universal a malady, so long established, so habitual, so deeply rooted in the powers of our soul, and so confirmed by the example of the human race. He who considers this will not be astonished at the mystery of the Incarnation and Passion of the Son of God, and the medicine of the Sacraments. For so great and strange an evil, extraordinary remedies were needed, since God in His tender mercy wished to cure them; and even with this, have all these crimes ceased?

Neither the law of nature nor the written law was sufficient, for they only taught the knowledge of right and wrong, which was not enough as the chief ill consisted in the disorder and rebellion of our desires, rather than in our ignorance. Therefore medicine for the mind could not cure the wound of our rebellious will. To remedy this mortal wound, nothing could be more efficacious than the Mystery and Passion of our Saviour, as we shall explain.

*(To be continued)*

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## REVIEWS

THE BEGINNING OF GOODNESS. By Columba Cary-Elwes, Monk of Ampleforth. (Burns Oates: 3s. 6d.)

An excellent book this; buy it (you couldn't spend 3/6 better), put it in an envelope (it has no hard corners) and literally for