

communicated to it sin and death, so the new Adam, Jesus Christ, the head of redeemed and regenerated mankind communicates to them His divine life, through baptism first, and then through Penance. This is what St. Paul means when he says, "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be alive" (1st Cor. xv c. 22 v.), and also when in several places he teaches that in Christ we are made "new creatures." And this new creation, effected by God through the sacrament of His infinite pity and compassion, is a more gracious and more beneficent exercise of divine omnipotence, goodness and mercy, than the material creation, than all the glories of the heavens and the varied beauties spread abroad on the face of nature. This is doubtless the mind of the Church when she declares that the re-creation or re-formation of man through the redemption is more wonderful, more glorious than his original creation, (*Deus qui humanæ substantiæ dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti et MIRABILIS reformasti*).

Mortal sin not only strikes the soul dead but it also destroys all the merits the sinner may have acquired and accumulated during years spent in a state of grace and in the exercise of good and holy works. It is a doctrine of faith that good, that is supernatural works, done in a state of grace, are, by the free appointment and good-will of God, meritorious of eternal life and of proportionate degrees of glory in heaven. So that every man who does acts of faith or charity or self-denial or piety will receive a reward both in this life and the next according to those actions. Every person who performs acts of virtue will receive an increase of virtue and of grace in this life; and hereafter, as the Council of Florence defines, the glory of the blessed shall be in proportion to the measure of their charity on earth. There is a link of connection between the measure of our charity here and the measure of our glory hereafter. This is what is understood by merit. Now mortal sin destroys at one blow all the merits of a whole life. No matter how many years a man may have spent in virtue and in holiness, no matter what heights of Christian