

When You want to be Convinced. VI.

The Sin of Adam.

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Dear Father: It's just about one a.m. and I've been having quite a session with two jessed agnostics between the ages of 25 and 30 who went to Catholic grade and high school for the last five years they have been reading Voltaire, Tom Paine, Brandeis, Ingersoll, Freud, Rupert Hughes, Nietzsche, and especially Haldeman Julius. They can see nothing in the Christian religion but a rehash of the brotherly love philosophy of Confucius and the revamping of paganism on a higher plane.

"They contend that the Catholic religion is nothing more than a highly complicated and hazy system of theology, and that if there is a God He did not intend to burden the mind of man with such a maze of details and doubts. They argue that God is vain and proud and indifferent if He allows His children to be bewildered and probably lose their souls, if there is a soul, because He did not give them sufficient intellect to grasp or grace to believe the difficult things they are called upon to believe.

"The men they read enlarge upon the presumed contradictions of the Bible; they point out the ignorance of the Apostles, and say that if St. Thomas, their own companion, refused to believe his brothers disciples, they feel perfectly justified in being doubting Thomases; that Christ's words of reproof to Thomas are a very pretty speech put in by later chroniclers for those gullible enough to believe it.

"They say they want to but can't believe in a personal God. They are dismayed at the thought of oblivion after death....." -- and so forth through three pages.

Tom C.

Dear Tom: There are people who refuse to believe in the story of Adam and Eve and the apple, because it seems trivial and stupid. These are the people who complain against the law of the Church on forbidden books. The apple was free; the Haldeman Julius books cost a nickel apiece. Adam was promised all knowledge -- knowledge of good and evil -- for eating the forbidden fruit; your two men were promised knowledge of good and evil for a nickel. They ate the fruit; they have the knowledge of good and evil. Adam despised God's free gifts, but he finally worked his way back to God by the sweat of his brow.

Enclosed you will find five Bulletins of a series running just now. They will show just how some of the blind guides your men have been following lost their faith. The point running through them is that you can be convinced of anything you want to believe. In the case of most of these men, impurity gave birth to the false philosophy; in the case of Darwin it was sin against the Fourth Commandment; in the case of your friends it is Pride, the sin of Adam. If it were impurity they would stand a better chance of conversion: impurity degrades and humiliates and shows the need of God, while pride blinds.

"False Prophets", which you suggested to them, is an excellent book; so is "Rebuilding a Lost Faith, by an American Agnostic." "Credentials of Christianity" gives a brief popular resume of the historicity of the Gospels. But what they need more than anything else is to say the beads. Faith is a gift of God, and it comes in answer to prayer, humble prayer. The Mother of God is our best guide back to God.

If they want to be convinced, they can be. They have despised the warning of the Church; she excommunicated them when they read their first Index author, because she knew they would lose the Faith anyway. They sold their birthright for a nickel's worth of reading matter; what was a free gift, despised, they must get back by hard labor and prayer.

PRAYERS: Victor Woeste's brother was killed Thursday; Arthur Hall's mother is very sick. Jack Adams and Bob Snell ask prayers for their very sick relatives; Mr. O'Shea, C.S.C., has been called to the bedside of his dying father.