

By saying: I believe in God, . . . the Creator of heaven and earth, we implicitly profess the creation of the angels, and all that faith teaches us concerning these exalted spirits.

A king ought to have a court, ministers, an army obedient to his commands; and the greater his kingdom the more distinguished his ministers, the more numerous his army. God, the almighty Sovereign of the universe, ought therefore to have a most brilliant court, an army innumerable.

Now, the court, the ministers, the army of God, are the angels whom He made to inhabit heaven and to be the ornaments of His palace. The angels are pure spirits, endowed with an intelligence, a will, a power and beauty far surpassing those of man.

1. They are called pure spirits because they have not been created, as our soul, to animate a body that may serve as their instrument or agent. Unlike us, they have no need of that material complement.

2. They are endowed with intelligence, will, power, and beauty : these are the natural perfections of the angels, which resemble those common to men; but the power, the beauty, and the other gifts of the most distinguished amongst men are but as a shadow of those of the angels. I saw, says St. John, another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was enlightened by his glory (Apoc. xviii. i).

Besides these natural perfections, the angels have received from God the supernatural gift of grace. It is in this sanctifying grace which they received in their creation that above all their beauty consists. Some of them lost this grace, and with this grace all the beauty with which they were adorned, remaining naught but hideous monsters, horrible demons.

The cause of this change was sin. God, in bestowing on the angels the riches of His grace, had destined them to enjoy the glory of heaven. But, as all other creatures, being held to obey Him, to acknowledge His sovereign dominion, He at once put their fidelity to a test. But, alas! Some of them, heeding the voice of pride, dared to rebel against their Creator and to refuse Him obedience, saying, if not in words, at least in acts: I will not serve thee (Jer. ii. 20). Such the sin and fall of the angels.

A great multitude of these heavenly spirits about one third of them, as some theologians believe fell into sin, and by sin incurred the indignation of God, who hastened them into hell, into everlasting fire, prepared, as says Jesus Christ, for the devil and his angels (St. Matt. xxv. 41).

Let us here learn, my brethren, what is the malice of mortal sin, since, for having committed only one, the angels of light were transformed into demons and condemned to eternal punishments.