

Against Romanism No Iii. on Purgatory

by J.H. Newman

The Roman doctrine of Purgatory is the belief that souls are purified in a place called Purgatory after death, in order to enter heaven.

Scripture: Isaiah 4:4, Malachi 3:3, Matthew 12:32, Luke 16:9, 1 Corinthians 3:15

Topics: "Purgatory Doctrine", "Roman Catholicism"

Description

Archbishop Ussher's Answer to a Jesuit leads to an inquiry about the Roman tenet of Purgatory, after deducting evidence from early Church usages. Ussher's explanations challenge the prima facie evidence supporting the doctrine. The sermon delves into the history of the rise of the doctrine of Purgatory, exploring the opinions in the early Church concerning it. The doctrine of Purgatory seems to have originated from the human mind's conjectures about future destinies, coinciding with obscure texts of Scripture, leading to various suppositions and speculations. The sermon highlights the influence of miracles, visions, and obscure texts in shaping the belief in Purgatory.

Transcript

THE extract from Archbishop Ussher's Answer to a Jesuit, contained in Tract 72, on the subject of the ancient Commemorations for the Dead in Christ, may fitly be succeeded by an inquiry as to what degree and sort of proof remains for the Roman tenet of Purgatory, after deducting from the evidence those usages or statements of the early Church, which are commonly supposed, but, as Ussher shows, improperly, to countenance it. Ussher's explanations have had the effect, it is presumed, of cutting away the prima facie evidence, on which the doctrine is usually rested; and it now remains to see what is left when it is withdrawn. With this view it is proposed in the following pages to draw out in detail the evidence alleged by the Romanists in behalf of their belief, with such remarks as may be necessary, in order to form a fair estimate of it. A plain statement of the doctrine itself; and of its rise, shall be also attempted, as not unseasonable at a time when the strength of Romanism rests in no small degree in its opponents mistaking the points in debate, and making or refuting propositions which but indirectly or partially bear upon the errors which they desire to combat.

Before commencing, it is necessary to warn the reader against estimating the magnitude or quality of any of those errors by its apparent dimensions in the theory. What seems to be a small deviation from correctness in the abstract system, becomes considerable and serious when it assumes a substantive form. This is especially the case with all doctrinal discussions, in which the undeveloped germs of many

diversities of practice and moral character, lie thick together in small compass, and as if promiscuously and without essential differences. The highest truths differ from the most miserable delusions by what appears to be a few words or letters. The discriminating mark of orthodoxy, the Homoousion, has before now been ridiculed, however irrationally, as being identical, all but the letter i, with the heretical symbol of the Homoiouision. What is acknowledged in the Arian controversy, must be endured without surprise in the Roman, in whatever degree it occurs. We may be taunted as differing from the Romanists only in phrases and modes of expression; and we may be taunted, or despised, according to the fate of our Divines for three centuries past, as taking a middle, timid, unsatisfactory ground, neither quite agreeing nor quite disagreeing with our opponents. We may be charged with dwelling on trifles and niceties, in a way inconsistent with plain, manly good sense; but in truth it is not we who are the speculatists, and unpractical controversialists, but they who forget that *hae nugae seria ducunt in mala*.

But again there is another reason, peculiar to the Roman controversy, which occasions a want of correspondence between the appearance presented by the Roman theology in theory, and its appearance in practice. The separate doctrines of Romanism are very different, in position, importance, and mutual relation, in the abstract, and when developed, applied, and practised. Anatomists tell us that the skeletons of the most various animals are formed on the same type; yet the animals are dissimilar and distinct, in consequence of the respective differences of their developed proportions. No one would confuse between a lion and a bear; yet many of us at first sight would be unable to discriminate between their respective skeletons. Romanism in the theory may differ little from our own creed; nay, in the abstract type, it might even be identical, and yet in the actual framework, and still further in the living and breathing form, it might differ essentially. For instance, the doctrine of Indulgences is, in the theory, entirely connected with the doctrine of Penance; that is, it has relation solely to this world, so much so that Roman apologists sometimes speak of it without even an allusion to its bearings elsewhere: but we know that in practice it is mainly, if not altogether, concerned with the next world, with the alleviation of sufferings in Purgatory.

And further still, as regards the doctrine of Purgatorial suffering, there have been for many ages in the Roman Church gross corruptions of its own doctrine, untenable as that doctrine is even by itself. The decree of the Council of Trent, which will presently be introduced, acknowledges the fact. Now we believe that those corruptions still continue; that Rome has never really set herself in earnest to eradicate them. The pictures of Purgatory so commonly seen in countries in communion with Rome, the existence of Purgatorian societies, the means of subsistence accruing to the clergy from belief in it, afford a strange contrast to the simple wording and apparent innocence of the decree by which it is made an article of faith. It is the contrast between poison in its lifeless seed, and the same developed, thriving, and rankly luxuriant in the actual plant.

And lastly, since we are in no danger of becoming Romanists, and may bear to be dispassionate and (I may say) philosophical in our treatment of their errors, some passages in the following account of Purgatory are more calmly written than would satisfy those who were engaged with a victorious enemy at their doors. Yet, whoever be our opponent, Papist or Latitudinarian, it does not seem to be wrong to be as candid and conceding as justice and charity allow us. Nor is it unprofitable to weigh accurately how much the Romanists have committed themselves in their formal determinations of doctrine, and how far by GOD'S merciful providence they had been restrained and overruled; and again how far they must retract, in order to make amends to Catholic truth and unity.

CHAPTER 1. STATEMENT OF THE ROMAN DOCTRINE CONCERNING PURGATORY

Ã 2. PROOF OF THE ROMAN DOCTRINE CONCERNING PURGATORY.

Ã 3. HISTORY OF THE RISE OF THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY, AND OPINIONS IN THE EARLY CHURCH CONCERNING IT.

Ã 4. THE COUNCIL OF FLORENCE.

Ã 1. STATEMENT OF THE ROMAN DOCTRINE CONCERNING PURGATORY.

THE Roman doctrine is thus expressed in the Creed of Pope Pius IV.

Constanter teneo Purgatorium esse, animasque ibi detentas fidelium suffragiis juvari.

"I hold without wavering that there is a Purgatory, and that souls there detained are aided by the suffrages of the faithful."

The words of this article are taken from the decree of the Council of Trent on the subject, (Sess. 25,) which runs as follows:

"Whereas the Church Catholic, fully instructed by the Holy Ghost, hath from the sacred Scriptures and ancient tradition of the Fathers, in sacred Councils, and last of all in this present Oecumenical Synod, taught that there is a Purgatory, and that souls there detained are aided by the suffrages of the living, and above all by the acceptable sacrifice of the Altar, this holy Synod enjoins on Bishops, to make diligent efforts that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory, handed down from the holy Fathers and sacred Councils, be believed, maintained, taught, and everywhere proclaimed by the disciples of Christ. At the same time, as regards the uneducated multitude, let the more difficult and subtle questions, such as tend not to edification nor commonly increase piety, be excluded from popular discourses. Moreover let them disallow the publication and discussion of whatever is uncertain or suspicious; and prohibit whatever is of a curious or superstitious nature, or savours of filthy lucre, as the scandals and stumbling-blocks of believers. And let them provide, that the suffrages of believers living, that is, the sacrifices of masses, prayers, alms, and other works of piety, which believers living are wont to perform for other believers dead, be performed according to the rules of the Church, piously and religiously; and whatever are due for them from the endowments of testators, or in other way, be fulfilled, not in a perfunctory way, but diligently and accurately by the Priests and Ministers of the Church, and others who are bound to do this service."

Such is the Roman doctrine; and taken in the mere letter there is little in it against which we shall be able to sustain formal objections. Purgatory is not spoken of at all as a place of pain; it need only mean, what its name implies, a place of purification. There is indeed much presumption in asserting definitively that there is such a place, and assuredly there is not only presumption, but very great daring and uncharitableness in including belief in it, as Pope Pius's Creed goes on to do, among the conditions of salvation; but if we could consider it as confined to the mere opinion that that good which is begun on earth is perfected in the next world, the tenet would be tolerable. The word "detentas" indeed expresses a somewhat stronger idea; yet after all hardly more than that the souls in Purgatory would be happier out of it than in it, and that they cannot of their own will leave it; which is not much to grant. Further, that the prayers of the living benefit the dead in Christ, is, to say the least, not inconsistent, as Ussher shows us, with the primitive belief. So much as to the letter of the decree; but it is not safe to go by the letter: on the contrary, we are bound to take the universal and uniform doctrine taught and received in the Roman Communion, as the real and true interpreter of words which are in themselves comparatively innocent.

What that doctrine is, may be gathered from the words of the Catechism of Trent, in which the spirit of Romanism, not being bound by the rules which shackle it in the Council, speaks out. The account of Purgatory which that formulary supplies, shall here be taken as our text, and Cardinal Bellarmine's Defence shall be used as a comment upon it.

The Catechism then speaks as follows:

"Est Purgatorius ignis, quo piorum animae ad definitum tempus cruciatae

expiantur, ut eis in aeternam patriam ingressus patere possit, in quam nihil coquinatum ingreditur."--Part i. De Symb. 5.

"There is a Purgatorial fire, in which the souls of the pious are tormented for a certain time, and cleansed, in order that an entrance may lie open to them into their eternal home, into which nothing defiled enters."

In like manner Bellarmine says,

"Purgatory is a certain place in which, as if in a prison, souls are purged after this life, which have not been fully purged in it, in order, (that is,) that thus purged they may be enabled to enter heaven, which nothing defiled shall enter."

A painful light is at once cast by these comments on the Synodal Decree. "There is a Purgatory" in the Decree, is interpreted by Bellarmine "there is a sort of prison;" and by the Catechism, "there is a Purgatorial fire." And whereas the Decree merely declares that souls are "detained there," the Catechism says they are "tormented and cleansed." Moreover, both the Catechism and Bellarmine imply that this is the ordinary mode of attaining heaven, inasmuch as no one scarcely can be considered, and no one can be surely known, to leave this world "fully purged;" whereas the Decree speaks vaguely of "the souls there." So much at first sight; now to consider the persons with which Purgatory is concerned, the sins, condition of souls, place, time, punishment, and remedies; Bellarmine likening it to a carcer, the Catechism saying that the "animae piorum ad definitum tempus cruciatae expiantur purgatorio igne."

1. The Persons who are reserved for Purgatory.

THE Roman Church holds that Christians or believers only are tenants of Purgatory, as for Christians only are offered their prayers, alms, and masses. The question follows whether all Christians? not all Christians, but such as die in GOD'S favour, yet with certain sins unforgiven. Some Christians die simply in GOD'S favour with all their sins forgiven; others die out of His favour. as the impenitent, whether Christians or not; but others, and that the great majority, die, according to the Romanists, in GOD'S favour, yet more or less under the bond of their sins.

And so far we may unhesitatingly allow to them, or rather we ourselves hold the same, if we hold that after Baptism there is no plenary pardon of sins in this life to the sinner, however penitent, such as in Baptism was once vouchsafed to him. If for sins committed after Baptism we have not yet received a simple and unconditional absolution, surely penitents from this time up to the day of judgment may be considered in that double state of which the Romanists speak, their persons accepted, but certain sins uncanceled.

Such a state is plainly revealed to us in Scripture as a real one, in various passages, to which we appeal as well as the Romanists. Let the case of David suffice. On his repentance Nathan said to him, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die; howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great

occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." 2 Sam. xii 13, 14. Here is a perspicuous instance of a penitent restored to GOD'S favour at once, yet his sin afterwards visited; and it needs very little experience in life to be aware that such punishments occur continually, though no one takes them to be an evidence that the sufferer himself is under GOD'S displeasure, but rather accounts them punishments even when we have abundant proofs of his faith, love, holiness, and fruitfulness in good works.

So far then we can not be said materially to oppose the Romanists. They on the other hand agree with us in maintaining that CHRIST'S death might, if GOD so willed, be applied for the removal even of these specific punishments of sins which they call temporal punishments, as fully as it really is for the acceptance of the soul of the person punished, or the removal of eternal punishment. Further both parties agree, that in matter of fact it is not so applied; the experience of life shows it; else every judgment might be taken as evidence of the person suffering it being under GOD'S wrath.

The death of the disobedient prophet from Judah would, in that case, prove that he perished eternally, which surely would be utterly presumptuous and uncharitable. As far as this then we have no violent difference of principle with the Romanists; but at this point we separate from them; they say these temporal punishments on sin are inflicted on the faults incurring them, in a certain fixed proportion; that every sin of a certain kind has a definite penalty or price; in consequence, that if it is not fully discharged in this life, it must be hereafter; and that Purgatory is the place of discharging it.

2. The sins for which persons are confined in Purgatory.

The next question is, what are the sins which are thus punished? not all sins of Christians, for some incur an eternal punishment. There are sins, it is maintained, which in themselves merit eternal damnation, are directly opposed to love or charity, quench grace, and throw the doer of them out of GOD'S favour. These in consequence are called mortal; such as murder, adultery, or blasphemy. Such sins do not lead to Purgatory; hell is their portion if unrepented of. But all but these, all but unrepented mortal sins are in the case of Christians punished in Purgatory. Of these it follows there are two kinds, sins though repented of, and sins though not mortal; concerning which a few words shall be said.

1. Mortal sins, though repented of, and though the offender cease to be under GOD'S displeasure, yet have visibly their own punishment in many cases, as in the instance of David. But the Romanists consider that these sins have their penalty assigned to them as if by weight and measure; moreover, that we can ourselves take part in discharging it, and by our own act anticipate and supersede GOD'S judgment, according to the text: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." This voluntary act on our part is called Penance, and is said to expiate the sin, that is, to wash away its temporal effects. Should we die before the full temporal punishment, or satisfaction, has been paid for all our mortal sins, we must pay the rest hereafter, i. e. in Purgatory.

2. Sins which are not mortal, are called venial, and are such as do not quench grace, or run counter to love. Bellarmine thus contrasts them:

"Mortal sins are they which absolutely turn us from GOD, and merit eternal punishment; Venial those which somewhat impede our course to Him, but do not turn it, and are with little pains blotted out. The former are crimes, the latter sins....Mortal sin is like a deadly wound, which suddenly kills; Venial is a slight stroke, which does not endanger life, and is easily healed. The former fights with love, which is the soul's life; the latter is rather beside than against love."--De Amiss. Grat. i. 2.

Venial sin differs from Mortal in two ways, in kind and degree. An idle word, excessive laughter, and the like, are sins in kind distinct from perjury or adultery. Again, anger is a venial sin when slight and undesigned, but when indulged interferes with love and is mortal; a theft of a large sum may be mortal, of a small venial.

Venial sins, being such, are considered by Romanists not to deserve so much as eternal punishment, to be pardonable not merely by an express and immediate act of GOD'S mercy, or again through the virtue of our state of regeneration, but to be intrinsically venial, to offend GOD, but not so as to alienate Him. They rest this doctrine upon such passages as the following: "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," James i. 15.; therefore, before it is finished or perfected, it has no such fearful power. Still they say it requires some punishment; which it receives in the next world, should it not receive it in this, that is, in Purgatory.

Such then are the sins of GOD'S true servants, penitent believers, for which, according to the Romanists, they suffer in Purgatory; mortal sins repented of, and those sins of infirmity which befall them so continually and so secretly, that they cannot repent of them specifically if they would, and which do not deserve eternal punishment, though they do not. They consider the Purgatorial punishment of venial sins to be meant by the Apostle, when he speaks of those who, building on the true foundation "wood, bay, and stubble," are "saved so as by fire;" and the punishment for mortal sins, in our SAVIOUR'S declaration that certain prisoners shall not go out till they have "paid the very last mite." Luke xii. 59. It may be added, that Martyrdom is supposed to be a full expiation of whatever guilt of sin still rests on the Christian undergoing it; and therefore to stand instead of Purgatory. Martyrs then are at once admitted to the Beatific Vision, which is the privilege in which Purgatory terminates.

From this account of the inmates of Purgatory, and the causes why they are there detained, we gather what has already been hinted, that the one main or rather sole reason of the appointment, is a satisfaction to GOD'S justice. The persons concerned are believers destined for bliss eternal; but before they pass on from earth to heaven, the course of their existence is, as it were, suspended, and they are turned aside to discharge a debt; how they effect it, or in what length of time, or with what effect on themselves, being questions as beside the mark, as if they were used with reference to the payment of a charge in worldly matters. It is an appointment altogether without bearing upon their moral character or eternal prospects; and after it is over, is wiped out as though it had never been.

3. The moral condition of souls in Purgatory.

Bellarmino well illustrates the supposed mental state of believers while in Purgatory by comparing them to travellers who come up to a fortified town after nightfall, and have to wait at the gates till the morning. Such persons have come to the end of their journey; they are not on the way, they have attained; they are sure of admittance, which is a matter of time only. Accordingly the Romanists hold that souls in Purgatory be come neither better or worse, neither sin nor add to their good works; they are one and all perfect in love, and ready for heaven, were it not for this debt, which hangs about them as so much rust or dross, and cannot be purged away except by certain appointed external remedies. They support this view of the stationary condition of the soul in Purgatory by such texts as, the following: "The night cometh, when no man can work." "Where the tree falls, there it shall be." "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body." John ix. 4. Eccles. xi. 3. 2 Cor. v. 10.

Next, with the exception of some few theologians, they consider that souls in Purgatory are comforted with the assurance that their eternal happiness is secured to them. Their state in consequence is thus described by Bellarmine (ii. 4.).

"You will object that they may be in doubt whether they are in hell or in purgatory. Not so; for in hell GOD is blasphemed, in Purgatory He is praised; in hell there is neither habit of faith, nor hope, nor love of GOD, in Purgatory all of these. A soul then which shall understand that it hopes in GOD, praises and loves GOD, will clearly know it is not in hell. But perhaps it will fear it is to be sent to hell, though not there yet; neither can this be, for the same faith remains in it, which it had here. Here it believed according to the plain word of Scripture, that after death none can become of good bad, or of bad good, and none but the bad are to be sent into hell. When then it perceives that it loves God, and is therefore good, it will not fear damnation."

4. The place and time of Purgatory.

On this subject the Church has not formally determined any thing; but the common opinion of the Schoolmen is that it is one of four prisons or receptacles, which are situated in the heart of the earth, Hell for the damned, the Limbus Puerorum for children dying without Baptism, the Limbus Patrum for the just who died before the passion of CHRIST, and who since that time have all been transferred from it to heaven, and Purgatory for believers under punishment. In other words, whereas all punishment is either for a time or eternal, either positive (poena sensus), or negative (poena damni), that of good men before CHRIST'S coming, was the poena damna, or absence of GOD'S light and joy for a time, that of unbaptized infants is the poena damni for ever, that of Purgatory the poena sensus for a time, that of Hell the poena sensus for ever. To these some Romanists have added a fifth, that is, of faithful souls, who without being yet admitted into heaven, are yet secured against all pain; but these according to Bellarmine, as at least enduring the poena damni, are to be considered in Purgatory, though in the most tolerable place in it, as being but in the condition of the old Fathers before CHRIST came.

The time of Purgatory depends of course upon the state of the debt which is to be liquidated in each case, and varies consequently with the individual. Martyrs, as has been above stated, are supposed to satisfy it in the very act of Martyrdom, others will not be released till the day of judgment. Again, the period of suffering depends upon the exertions of survivors, by prayers, alms, and masses, which have power not only to relieve but to shorten the pain.

5. The nature of the Punishment.

Here the Roman Church has defined nothing; its catechism, as we have seen, and its theologians in accordance, consider it to be material fire, but in the Council of Florence, the Greeks would not do more than subscribe to the existence of Purgatory; they denied that the punishment was fire; the question accordingly remains open, that is, it is not determined either way de fide. The difficulty, how elementary fire or any thing of a similar nature can affect the disembodied soul, is paralleled by St. Austin by the mystery of the union of soul and body.

The pains of Purgatory are considered to be horrible and far exceeding any in this life; "Poenas Purgatorii esse atrocissimas; et cum illis nullas poenas hujus vitae comparandas, docent constanter Patres," says Bellarmine (ii. 14.), and proceeds to refer to Austin, Pope Gregory, Bede, Anselm, and Bernard. Yet on this point theologians differ. Some consider the chief misery to consist in the poena damni, or absence of GOD'S presence, which to holy souls, understanding and desiring it, would be as intolerable as extreme

thirst or hunger to the body; and in this way seem to put all purgatorial pain on a level, or rather assign the greater pain to the more spiritually minded. Others consider the poena damni to be alleviated by the certainty of heaven and of the continually lessening term of their punishment. With them then the poena sensus, or the fire, is the chief source of torment, which admits of degrees according to the will of GOD.

6. The efficacy of the suffrages of the Church.

By suffrages are meant, co-operations of the living with the dead; prayers, masses, and works, such as alms, pilgrimages, fastings, &c. These aids which individuals can supply, alms, prayers, &c., only avail when offered by good persons; for he who is not accepted himself, cannot do acceptable service for another. Moreover these aids may be directed either to the benefit of all souls in Purgatory indiscriminately, or specially to the benefit of a certain soul in particular. There is one other means of escaping the penalties due to sin in Purgatory, which may briefly be mentioned, viz. by the grant of indulgences; these are dispensed on the following theory. Granting that a certain fixed temporal penalty attached to every act of sin, in such case, it would be conceivable that, as the multitude of Christians did not discharge their total debt in this life, so some extraordinarily holy men might more than discharge it. Such are the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Ascetics, and the like, who have committed few sins, and have undergone extreme labours and sufferings, voluntary or involuntary. This being supposed, the question rises, what becomes of the overplus; and then there seems a fitness that what is not needed for themselves, should avail for their brethren who are still debtors. It is accordingly stored, together with CHRIST'S merits, in a kind of treasure house, to be dispensed according to the occasion, and that at the discretion of the Church. The application of this treasure is called an Indulgence, which stands instead of a certain time of penance in this life, or for the period, whatever it be, to which that time is commuted in Purgatory. In this way, the supererogatory works of the Saints are supposed to go in payment of the debts of ordinary Christians.

Ä 2. PROOF OF THE ROMAN DOCTRINE CONCERNING PURGATORY.

1. Proofs from supernatural appearances.

THE argumentative ground, on which the belief in Purgatory was actually introduced, would seem to lie in the popular stories of apparitions witnessing to it. Not that it rose in consequence of them historically, or that morally it was founded on them; only that when persons came to ask themselves why they received it, this was the ultimate ground of evidence on which the mind fell back; viz. the evidence of miracles, not of Scripture, or of the Fathers.

Bellarmino enumerates it as one of the confirmatory arguments. With this view he refers in particular to some relations of Gregory of Tours, A.D. 573; of Pope Gregory, A.D. 600; of Bede, A.D. 700; of Peter Damiani, A.D. 1057; of St. Bernard, A.D. 1100, and of St. Anselm, A.D. 1100. The dates are worth noticing, if it be true, as is here assumed, that such supernatural accounts as then were put forth, are really the argument on which the doctrine was and is received; for it would thence appear, first that the doctrine was not taught as divine before the end of the sixth century, next that when it was propagated, it was so on an (alleged) new revelation. The following miraculous narratives are found in a Protestant Selection from Roman writers, published in 1688, and entitled "Purgatory proved by Miracles."

"St. Gregory, the great, writes that the soul of Paschasius appeared to St. Germanus, and testified to him, that he was freed from the pains of Purgatory for his prayers.

"When the same St. Gregory was abbot of his Monastery, a monk of his, called Justus, now dead, appeared to another monk, called Copiosus, and advertized him, that he had been freed from the torments of Purgatory, by thirty Masses, which Pretiosus, Prefect of the Monastery by the order of St. Gregory, had said for his soul, as is recounted in his life.

"St. Gregory of Tours writes of a holy damsel, called Vitaliana, that she appeared to St. Martin, and told him she had been in Purgatory for a venial sin which she had committed, and that she had been delivered by the prayers of the Saint.

"Peter Damiani writes, that St. Severin appeared to a clergyman, and told him, that he had been in Purgatory, for not having said the Divine Service at due hours, and that afterwards GOD had delivered him, and carried him to the company of the blessed.

"St. Bernard writes, that St. Malachy freed his sister from the pains of Purgatory by his prayers; and that the same sister had appeared unto him, begging of him that relief and favour.

"And St. Bernard himself by his intercession freed another, who had suffered a whole year the pains of Purgatory; as William, Abbot, writes in his life."--Flowers Of the Lives of the Saints, p. 830.

These instances among others are adduced by Bellarmine; and he adds, "plura similia legi possunt apud, &c.....sed quae attulimus, sunt magis authentica."--i. 11.

2. Proofs from the Old and New Testaments.

Bellarmino adduces the following texts from the Old and New Testaments; in doing which he must not be supposed to mean, that each of them contains in itself the evidence of its relevancy and availableness, or could be understood without some authoritative interpretation; only, if it is asked, "is Purgatory the doctrine of Holy Scripture, and where?" he would answer, that in matter of fact it is as taught in the following passages, according to the explanations of them found in various writers of consideration.

1. 2 Macc. xii. 42--45. "Besides that noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forso much as they saw before their eyes the things that came to pass for the sins of those that were slain. And when he had made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem, to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the Resurrection; for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also, in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin."

2. Tob. iv. 17. "Pour out thy bread on the burial of the just, but give nothing to the wicked;" that is, at the burial of the just, give alms; which were given to gain for them the prayers of the poor.

3. 1 Sam. xxxi. 13. "And they took their bones," [of Saul and his sons,] "and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days." Vid. also 2 Sam. i. 12. iii. 35. This fasting was an offering for their souls.

4. Ps. xxxviii. 1. "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy wrath; neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure." By wrath is meant Hell; by hot displeasure, Purgatory.

5. Ps. lxxvi. 12. "We went through fire and through water, but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place," (refrigerium.) Water is Baptism; fire is Purgatory.

6. Is. iv. 4. "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning."

7. Is. ix. 18. "Wickedness burneth as the fire; it shall devour the briars and thorns."

8. Mic.vii. 8,9. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness."

9. Zech. ix. 11. "As for Thee also, by the blood of Thy covenant, I have sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water." This text is otherwise taken to refer to the Limbus Patrum.

10. Mal. iii. 3. "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver," &c.

From the New Testament he adduces the following texts:

1. Matt. xii. 32. "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come:" that means, "neither in Purgatory," for in hell the very supposition of forgiveness is excluded.

2. 1 Cor. iii. 15. "He himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

3. I Cor. xv. 29. "Else what shall they do, which are baptized" i.e. who undergo the baptism of tears and humiliation, who pray, fast, give alms, &c. "for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?"

4. Matt. v. 25, 26. -- Luke xii. 58, 59. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." By the way, is meant this present life; by the adversary, the Law; by the Judge, our Saviour; by the officer, or executioner, the Angels; by the prison, Purgatory.

5. Matt. v. 22. "Whosoever is angry with his brother with out a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the Council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Here are three kinds of punishments spoken of Hell belongs to the next world; therefore also do the other two. Hence there are in the next world, besides eternal punishment, punishments short of eternal.

6. Luke xvi. 9. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." To fail, is to die; the friends are the Saints in glory, and they receive us, i.e. from Purgatory, in consequence of their prayers.

7. Luke xxiii. 42. "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." That is, there is a remembrance and a remission of sin, not only in this life, but after it, in Christ's future kingdom.

8. Acts ii. 24. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death (inferi); because it was not possible that He should be-holden of it." Christ Himself was released from no pains on being raised, nor were the ancient Fathers in the Limbus, nor were lost souls released at all. Therefore the pains which God loosed, were those of souls in Purgatory.

9. Phil. ii. 10. "That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Vid. also Rev. v. 3. "And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon."

Now as to many of these texts, we who have not been educated in the belief of Purgatory, may well wonder how they come to be enlisted in support of Purgatory at all. This may be explained in some such way as the following, which may be of use in helping us to understand the state of mind under which the Romanists view them. It is obvious, as indeed has been already remarked, that they do not of themselves prove the doctrine, nor are they chosen by Bellarmine himself, but given on the authority of writers of various times. Could indeed competent evidence be brought from other quarters, that the doctrine really was true and Apostolical, we should not unreasonably have believed that some of them did allude to it; especially if writers of name, who might speak from tradition, so considered. We could not have taken upon ourselves to say at first sight that it certainly was not contained in them, only we should have waited for evidence that it was. Some of the texts in question are obscure, and seem to desiderate a meaning; and so far it is a sort of gain when they have any meaning assigned them, as though they were unappropriated territory which the first comer might seize. Again, the coincidence of several of them in one and the same mode of expression, implies that they have a common drift, whatever that drift is, that there is something about them which seems to have reference to secrets untold to man. Amid these dim and broken lights, the text in the Apocrypha first quoted, comes as if to combine and steady them. All this is said by way of analysing how it is that such a class of texts, though of so little cogency critically, has that influence with individuals, which it certainly sometimes has. The reason seems to be that the doctrine of Purgatory professes to interpret texts which God's word has left in obscurity. Yet, whatever be the joint force of such arguments from Scripture, in favor of the doctrine, it vanishes surely, at once and altogether, before one single clear text, such as the following: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours." Or again, if any one is destined to endure Purgatory for the temporal punishment of sins, one should think it would be persons circumstanced as the thief on the cross, a dying penitent; yet to him it is expressly said, "Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

3. Proofs from Antiquity.

After Scripture, Bellarmine brings the testimony of early Churches in Council, as follows:

1. The African Church: "Let the Altar Sacrament be celebrated fasting; if, however, there be any Commendation of the Dead made in the afternoon, let prayers only be used."--Conc. Carth. IV. c. 79.
2. The Spanish enjoins that suicides should not be prayed for, &c.--Conc. Bracar. I. c. 39.
3. The Gallic: "It has seemed fit, that in all celebrations of the Eucharist, the Lord should be interceded with in a suitable place in Church, for the spirits of the dead."--Conc. Cabilon.
4. The German defines, (Conc. Wormat. c. 10.) that prayers and offerings should be made even for those who are executed.

5. The Italic declares (Conc. VI. under Symmachus) that it is sacrilege to defraud the souls of the dead of prayer, &c.

6. The Greek in like manner.

Moreover, the Liturgies of St. James, St. Basil, &c. all contain prayers for the dead. Now these professed instances are here enumerated in order to show how plainly and entirely they fall short of the point to be proved. Not one of them implies the doctrine of Purgatory; or goes beyond the doctrine which Archbishop Ussher (vide Tract 72.) has shown to have existed in the early Church, that the Saints departed were not at once in their full happiness, and that prayers benefited them. One of these instances indeed is somewhat remarkable, the allowing prayers for malefactors executed; but all were the subject of prayer who were not excluded from hope, and malefactors are, even by us, admitted to Holy Communion, and are allowed the Burial Service. To pray for them was merely the expression of hope.

Next, Bellarmine appeals to the Fathers, of whom I shall only cite those within the first five hundred years; viz. Tertullian, Cyprian, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, Jerome, Chrysostom, Paulinus, Augustine, Theodoret, and one or two others. Now in order to keep the point in controversy clearly in view, let it be recollected that we are not disputing the existence in the Ritual of the Church, of the custom of praying for the dead in Christ; but why prayer was offered was a question in dispute, a point unsettled by any Catholic tradition, but variously treated by various Doctors at various times. There is no thing contrary to the genius of religion, natural and revealed, that duties should be prescribed, yet the reasons for them not told us, as Bishop Butler has abundantly showed; and the circumstance that the ancients do agree in the usage, but differ as to the reasons, shows that the reasons were built upon the usage, not the usage on the reasons. And while this variety of opinions in the early Church, as to the meaning of the usage, forfeits for any one of these any claim to be considered apostolical, of course it deprives the doctrine of Purgatory of authority inclusively, even supposing for argument's sake it was received by some early writers as true. Purgatory is but a violent hypothesis to give meaning to a usage, for which other hypotheses short of it and very different from it, and equally conjectural with it, may be assigned, nay, and were assigned before it, and far more extensively. Let it be remembered then, when the following list of passages, professedly in behalf of Purgatory, is read, that, what we have to look for, is, not evidence of a certain usage, which we grant did exist, but of an opinion, of a particular opinion explaining it; not of Prayer for the dead simply, nor of the opinion that Prayer for the dead profits, but that such Prayer is intended and tends to rescue them from a state of suffering. Further what we look for is not the testimony of one or two writers to the truth of this opinion, even if one or two could be brought, but an agreement of all in its favour. If however it be said that the usage of Prayer in itself tends to the doctrine of Purgatory, I answer, that so far from it, in its primitive form it included prayers for the Virgin Mary and Apostles, which while retained were an indirect but forcible standing witness against the doctrine.

Tertullian, in his *de Corona*, § 3. speaks of "oblaciones pro defunctis," offerings for the dead.

Again, "Let her" [the widow] "pray for the soul of" [her deceased husband] "and ask for him a place of refreshment in the interval before the judgment, and a fellowship in the first resurrection, and let her offer on the anniversary of his falling to sleep."--*De Monogam.* § 10. Vid. also *de Pudicit.*

Cyprian. "The Bishops our predecessors . . . decreed that no one dying should nominate clerics as guardians or executors, and if any one had done this, no offering should be made for him, or sacrifice celebrated for his sleeping well."--*Epist. i. 9. et infra.*

Eusebius (vid. Constant. iv.) says that Constantine had wished to be buried in a frequented Church, in order to have the benefit of many prayers. On his death they offered the Holy Eucharist over his remains.

Cyril of Jerusalem. "We pray for all our community who are dead, believing that this is the greatest benefit to those souls for whom the offering is made."--Mystagog. 5.

Gregory Nazianzen. "Let us commend to GOD our own souls, and the souls of those who, as men more advanced on the same road, have arrived before us at their resting place."--Orat. in Caesar. fin.

Ambrose. "Therefore she is, I think, not so much to be lamented as to be followed with your prayers; she is not to be mourned over with your tears, but rather her soul is to be commended to God by your oblations."--Ep. ii. 8. ad Faustinum. Vid. also de ob. Theod., &c. &c.

Jerome. "Other husbands scatter on their wives' graves violets, roses, lilies, and purple flowers; but our Pammachius waters her holy ashes and reverend relics with the balsams of almsgiving; with such embellishments and perfumes he honours the sleeping remains, knowing what is written, ' As water quenches fire, so doth alms sin.'"--Ad Pammach.

Chrysostom. "The dead is aided not by tears, but by prayers, by supplications, by alms....Let us not weary in giving aid to the dead, offering prayers for them."--Hom. 41. in 1. ad Cor.

Again. "Not without purpose has it been ordained by the Apostles, that in the awful Mysteries a commemoration should be made of the dead; for they know that thence much gain accrues to them; much advantage."--Hom. 69. ad pop. Vid. also Hom. 32. in Matt. In Joan. Hom. 84. In Philipp. 3. In Act Apost. 21.

Paulinus, writing to Delphinus, Bishop of Bordeaux: "Do thy diligence that he may be granted to thee, and that from the least of thy sacred fingers the dews of refreshment may sprinkle his soul."

Augustine. "We read in the book of Maccabees that sacrifice was offered for the dead; but, though it were not even found in the old Scriptures, the authority of the universal Church is not slight, which is explicit as to this custom viz. that in the Priests' prayers which are offered to the LORD GOD at His altar, the commendation of the dead is included."--De Cur. pro mortuis. c. ii. et alibi.

Theodoret (Hist. v. 26.) mentions that Theodosius the younger fell down at the tomb of St. John Chrysostom, and prayed for the souls of his parents, then dead, Arcadius and Eudoxia.

Isidore. "Unless the Church Catholic believed that sins are remitted to the dead in Christ, she would not do alms or offer sacrifice to GOD for their spirits."--De off. div. i. 18.

Gregory the Great. "Much profiteth souls even after death the sacred oblation of the lifegiving Sacrifice, so that the souls of the dead themselves sometimes seem to ask for it."--Dial. iv. 55.

Again: "They who are not weighed down by grievous sins, are profited after death by burial in the Church, because that their relatives, whenever they come to the same sacred places, remember their own kin whose tombs they behold, and pray to the LORD for them."

It is evident that the above passages go no way to prove the point in debate, being nothing more in fact than Ussher allows to be found in the early Fathers. They contain the musings of serious minds feeling a mystery, and attempting to solve it, at least by conjecture. They state that prayers benefit the dead in

Christ, but how is either not mentioned, or vaguely, or hesitatingly, or discordantly. Accordingly, Bellarmine begins anew, and draws out a series of authorities for the doctrine of Purgatory expressly; and this certainly demands our attention more than the former. It contains such as the following:--

For instance, Origen says that "he who is saved, is saved by fire, that if he has any alloy of lead, the fire may melt and separate it, that all may become pure gold."--Hom. 6. in Exod.

Tertullian speaks of our being "committed into the prison beneath, which will detain us till every small offence is expiated, during the delay of the resurrection."--De Anim. 17.

Cyprian contrasts the being purged by torment in fire, and by martyrdom.--Epist. iv. 2.

Gregory Nazianzen speaks of the last Baptism being "one of fire, not only more bitter, but longer than the first Baptism."-- In Sancta lum. circ. fin.

Ambrose speaks of our being "saved through faith, as if through fire," which will be a trial under which grievous sinners will fall, while others will pass safe through it.--In Ps. xxxvi.

Basil speaks of the "Purgatorial fire," in cap. ix. Isa.

Gregory Nyssen, of "our recovering our lost happiness by prayer and religiousness in this life, or after death by the purgatorial fire."--Orat. pro Mort. Elsewhere too he speaks of the Purgatorial fire.

Eusebius Emisenus uses such determined words, as to require quoting. "This punishment under the earth will await those, who, having lost instead of preserving their Baptism, will perish for ever; whereas those who have done deeds calling for temporal punishments, shall pass over the fiery river and that fearful water the drops of which are fire."

Hilary declares that we have to undergo "that ever-living fire, which is a punishment of the soul in cleansing of sin."--In Ps. cxviii. Lactantius speaks to the same effect.--Div. Inst. vii. 21.

Jerome contrasts the eternal torments of the devil, and of atheists and infidels, with "the judgment tempered with mercy, of sinners and ungodly men, yet Christian, whose works are to be tried purified in the fire."--In fin. comment. in Is. In another place in a like contrast he speaks of Christians, if overtaken in a fault, being saved after punishment.--Lib. i. in Pelag.

Augustine has various passages in point, such as Civ. Dei xxi. 24, where speaking of believers who die with lighter sins, he says, "It is certain that these being purified before the day of judgment by means of temporal punishment, which their souls suffer, are not to be given over to eternal fire." Pope Gregory the first expresses the same doctrine, as do some others.

These instances are at first sight to the point, and demand serious consideration. Yet there is nothing in them really to alarm the inquirer whither he is being carried. I say this, that no one may be surprised at the deliberateness and over-patience with which I may seem to loiter over the explanation of them. First, then, let it be observed, were they ever so strong in favour of something more than we believe, it does not therefore follow that they take that very view which the Romanists take, nay, it does not necessarily follow that they take any one view at all, or agree with each other. Now it so happens neither the one or the other of these suppositions is true as regards those passages, though they ought both to hold, if the Roman doctrine is to be satisfactorily maintained. These Fathers, whatever they teach, do not teach Purgatory,

they do not teach any one view at all on the subject. Romanists consider Purgatory to be an article of faith, necessary to be believed in order to salvation; or in Bellarmine's words, "Purgatory is an article of faith, so that he who disbelieves its existence, will never have experience of it, but will be tormented in hell with everlasting fire." Now it can only be an article of faith, supposing it is held by Antiquity, and that unanimously. For such things only are we allowed to maintain, as come to us from the Apostles; and that only (ordinarily speaking) has evidence of so originating, which is witnessed by a number of independent witnesses in the early Church. We must have the unanimous "consent of Doctors," as an assurance that the Apostles have spoken; and much less can we tolerate their actual disagreement, in a case where unanimity was promised us. Now as regards Purgatory, not only are early writers silent as to the modern view of Rome, but they do not agree with each other; which proves they knew little more about the matter than ourselves, whatever they might conjecture; that they possessed no Apostolic Tradition, only at most entertained floating opinions on the subject. Nay, it is obvious, if we wished to believe them, we could not; for what is it we are to believe? If, as I shall show, various writers speak various things, which of their statements is to be taken? If this or that, it is but the language of an individual: if all of them at once, a doctrine results, discordant in its details, and in general outline, if it have any, vague and imperfect at the best.

Now as to the passages quoted by Bellarmine, it will be observed that in the number are extracts from the works of Origen, St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, St. Jerome, and Lactantius. He introduces the list with these words, "Sunt apertissima loca in Patribus, ubi asserunt Purgatorium, quorum pauca quaedam afferam," i. 10. "There are most perspicuous passages in the Fathers, in which they assert Purgatory, of which I will adduce some few." Will it be believed that in his second book these Fathers, nay, for the most part the very extracts, which he has given in proof of the doctrine, are enumerated as at variance with it, and mistaken in their notion of it?

He quotes a passage of Origen, (not the same) the very same two passages from St. Ambrose, the very same passage from St. Hilary, the very same from Lactantius, and a passage (not the same) from St. Jerome. Then he says, "Haec sententia, accepta ut sonat, manifestum errorem continet; for" (he proceeds) "it is defined in the Council of Florence, &c." ii. 1. Next he observes, "Adde, quod Patres adducti, Origene excepto videntur sano modo intelligi posse." At length, after he has given the two most favourable explanations assignable to their words, he adds of one of the two, "Sane hanc sententiam [quae docet omnes transituros per ignem, licet non omnes laedendi sint ab igne] nec auderem pro vera asserere, nec ut errorem improbare."

"The only alleviation of this strange inconsistency," says a work which has recently appeared, "is that he quotes not the very same sentences both for and against his Church, but adjoining ones." The work referred to, thus comments on Bellarmine's conduct, as throwing light upon the state of feeling under which Romanists engage in controversy. "A Romanist," the writer says, "cannot really argue in defence of his doctrines. He has too firm a confidence in their truth, if he is sincere in his profession, to enable him critically to adjust the due weight to be given to this or that evidence.

He assumes his Church's conclusion as true; and the facts or witnesses he adduces, are rather brought to receive an interpretation than to furnish a proof. His highest aim is to show the mere consistency of his theory, its possible adjustment, with the records of antiquity. I am not here inquiring how much of high but misdirected moral feeling is implied in this state of mind; certainly as we advance in perception of the truth, we all of us become less fitted to be controversialists.

If this, however, be a true explanation of Bellarmine's strange error, the more it tends to exculpate him, the deeper it criminales his system. He ceases to be chargeable with unfairness, only in proportion as the notion of the infallibility of Rome is admitted to be the sovereign and engrossing tenet of his communion, the foundation stone, or (as it may be called) the fulcrum of its theology. I consider then, that when he first adduces the aforementioned Fathers in proof of Purgatory, he was really but interpreting them; he was teaching what they ought to mean, what in charity they must be supposed to mean, what they might mean as far as the very words went, probably meant considering the Church so meant, and might be taken to mean, even if their authors did not so mean, from the notion that they spoke vaguely, and, as children, really meant something besides what they formally said, and that after all, they were but the spokesmen of the then existing Church, which, though silent, held the same doctrine which Rome has since defined and published.

This is to treat Bellarmine with the same charity with which he has on this supposition treated the Fathers, and it is to be hoped, with a nearer approach to the matter of fact. So much as to his first use of them; but afterwards, in noticing what he considers erroneous opinions on this subject, he treats them, not as organs of the Church infallible, but as individuals, and interprets their language by its literal sense or by the context....How hopeless then is it to contend with Romanists, as if they practically agreed to our foundation, however much they pretend to it!

Ours is antiquity: theirs the existing Church. Its infallibility is their first principle; belief in it is a deep prejudice, quite beyond the reach of any thing external. It is quite clear that the combined testimonies of all the Fathers, supposing such a case, would not have a feather's weight against a decision of the Pope in Council, nor would matter at all, except for their sakes who had by anticipation opposed it. They consider that the Fathers ought to mean what Rome has since decreed, and that Rome knows their meaning better than they themselves did.

That venturesome Church has usurped their place, and thinks it merciful, only not to banish outright the rivals she has dethroned. By an act, as it were, of grace she has determined, that, when they contradict her, though of no authority yet, as living in times of ignorance, they are not guilty of heresy but are only heterodox; and she keeps them around her, to ask their advice when it happens to agree with her own.

"Let us then understand the position of the Romanists towards us; they do not really argue from the Fathers, though they seem to do so. They may affect to do so on our behalf, happy if by an innocent stratagem they are able to convert us; but all the while in their own feelings, they are taking a far higher position. They are teaching, not disputing or proving. They are interpreting what is obscure in antiquity, purifying what is alloyed, correcting what is amiss, perfecting what is incomplete, harmonizing what is various. They claim and use all its documents as ministers and organs of that one infallible Church, which once forsooth kept silence, but since has spoken, which by a divine gift must ever be consistent with itself, and which bears with it its own evidence of divinity."

Leaving Bellarmine then, let us proceed to inquire what the opinion of the Fathers in the foregoing passages really is.

§ 3. HISTORY OF THE RISE OF THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY, AND OPINIONS IN THE EARLY CHURCH CONCERNING IT.

The argumentative ground of the doctrine of Purgatory as far as the Infallibility of the Church has not superseded any, has ever been, I conceive, the report of miracles and visions attesting it; but the historical origin is to be sought elsewhere, viz. in the anxious conjectures of the human mind about its future destinies, and the apparent coincidences of these with certain obscure texts of Scripture

These may be supposed to have operated as follows; as described in the work already cited. "HOW ALMIGHTY GOD will deal with the mass of Christians, who are neither very good nor very bad, is a problem with which we are not concerned, and which it is our wisdom and may be our duty, to put from our thoughts. But, when it has once forced itself upon the mind, we are led in self-defence, with a view of keeping ourselves from dwelling, unhealthily on particular cases, which come under our experience and perplex us, to imagine modes, not by which GOD does, (for that would be presumptuous to conjecture,) but by which he may solve the difficulty. Most men to our apprehensions, are too unformed in religious habits either for heaven or for hell, yet there is no middle state when CHRIST comes to judgment. In consequence it is obvious to have recourse to the interval before His coming, as a time during which this incompleteness might be remedied; a season, not of changing the spiritual bent and character of the soul departed, whatever that be, for probation ends with mortal life, but of developing it in a more determinate form, whether of good or of evil. Again, when the mind once allows itself to speculate, it will discern in such a provision a means, whereby those, who not without true faith at bottom yet have committed great crimes, or those who have been carried off in youth while still undecided, or who die after a barren though not an immoral or scandalous life, may receive such chastisement as may prepare them for heaven, and render it consistent with GOD'S justice to admit them thither. Again, the inequality of the sufferings of Christians in this life, compared one with another, leads the unguarded mind to the same speculations, the intense suffering, e. g. which some men undergo on their death-bed, seeming as if but an anticipation in their case of what comes after death upon others, who without greater claim on GOD'S forbearance, live without chastisement and die easily. I say, the mind will inevitably dwell upon such thoughts, unless it has been taught to subdue them by education or by the experience of their dangerousness.

"Various suppositions have, accordingly, been made, as pure suppositions, as mere specimens of the capabilities, (if one may so speak) of the Divine Dispensation, as efforts of the mind reaching forward and venturing beyond its depth into the abyss of the divine counsels. If one supposition could be produced, sufficient to solve the problem, ten thousand others are conceivable, unless indeed the resources of GOD'S Providence are exactly commensurate with man's discernment of them. Religious men, amid these searchings of heart, have naturally gone to Scripture for relief, to see if the inspired word anywhere gave them any clue for their inquiries. And hence, and from the speculations of reason upon what was there found, various notions have been hazarded at different times; for instance, that there is a certain momentary ordeal to be undergone by all men after this life, more or less severe according to their spiritual state; or that certain gross sins in good men will be thus visited, or their lighter failings and habitual imperfections; or that the very sight of divine perfection in the invisible world will be in itself a pain, while it constitutes the purification of the imperfect but believing soul; or that, happiness admitting of various degrees of intensity, penitents late in life may sink for ever into a state, blissful as far as it goes, but more or less approaching to unconsciousness; infants dying after baptism may be as gems paving the courts of heaven, or as the living wheels of the Prophet's vision; while matured Saints may excel in capacity of bliss, as well as in dignity, the highest Archangels. Such speculations are dangerous when indulged; the event proves it; from some of these in fact seems to have resulted the doctrine of Purgatory.

"Now the texts to which the minds of the early Christians seem to have been principally drawn, and from which they ventured to argue, were these two: 'The fire shall try every man's work,' &c.; and ' He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.' These texts, with which many more were found to accord, directed their thoughts one way, as making mention of 'fire,' whatever was meant by the word, as the instrument of trial and purification; and that, at some time between the present time and the judgment, or at the judgment. And accordingly without perhaps having any definite or consistent meaning in what they said, or being able to say whether they spoke literally or figuratively and with an indefinite reference to this life, as well as to the intermediate state, they sometimes named fire as the instrument' of recovering those who had sinned after their baptism. That this is the origin of the notion of a Purgatorial fire, I gather from these circumstances, first that they do frequently insist on the texts in question, next, that they do not agree in the particular sense they put upon them. That they quote them shows they rest upon them; that they vary in explaining them, that they had no Catholic sense to guide them. Nothing can be clearer, if these facts be so, than that the doctrine of the Purgatorial fire in all its senses, as far as it was more than a surmise, and was rested on argument, was the result of private judgment exerted in defect of Tradition, upon the text of Scripture..."

"As the doctrine, thus suggested by certain striking texts, grew in popularity and definiteness, and verged towards its present Roman form, it seemed a key to many others. Great portions of the books of Psalms, Job, and the Lamentations, which express the feelings of religious men under suffering, would powerfully recommend it by the forcible and most affecting and awful meaning which they received from it. When this was once suggested, all other meanings would seem tame and inadequate.

"To these must be added various passages from the Prophets, as that in the beginning of the 3rd chapter of Malachi, which speaks of fire as the instrument of judgment and purification when CHRIST comes to visit His Church.

"Moreover there were other texts of obscure and indeterminate bearing, which seemed on this hypothesis to receive a profitable meaning; such as our LORD'S words in the Sermon on the Mount, "Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing;" and St. John's expression in the apocalypse, that "no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book."

"Further, the very circumstance that no second instrument of a plenary and entire cleansing from sin was given after Baptism, such as Baptism, led Christians to expect that that unknown means, when accorded, would be of a more painful nature than

that which they had received so freely and instantaneously in infancy, and confirmed, not only the text already cited, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," but also St. Paul's announcement of the "judgment and fiery indignation" which awaits those who sinned [sin] after having been once "enlightened," and by CHRIST'

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