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FUNDAMENTALS OF
CATHOLIC DOGMA

EDITED IN ENGLISH

By

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teaches that man, with his natural power of cognition, can with certainty know the existence of God. D 1785, 1806. The Council of Trent teaches that free will was not lost or extinguished by the fall of Adam. D 815.

The wounding of nature extends to the body as well as to the soul. The 2nd Council of Orange (529) explained: totum, i.e., secundum corpus et animam, in detrius hominem commutatum (esse) (the whole man both in body and in soul was changed for the worse). D 174. Cf. D 181, 199, 793. Side by side with the two wounds of the body, sensibility to suffering (passibilitas) and mortality (mortalitas), theologians, with St. Thomas (S. th. I II 85, 3) enumerate four wounds of the soul, which are opposed to the four cardinal virtues: a) ignorance (ignorantia), that is, difficulty of knowing the truth (opposite to prudence), b) malice (malitia), that is the weakening of the power of the will (opposite to justice), c) weakness (infirmitas), that is, the recoiling before difficulties in the struggle for the good (opposite to fortitude), d) desire (concupiscentia) in the narrower sense, that is, the desire for satisfaction of the senses against the judgment of reason (opposite to temperance). The wounds of the body are caused by the loss of the preternatural gifts of impossibility and immortality, the wounds of the soul by the loss of the preternatural gift of freedom from concupiscentia.

There is a controversy as to whether the wounding of nature consists exclusively in the loss of the preternatural gifts, or whether human nature in addition is intrinsically weakened in an accidental manner. The former view, which is that adopted by St. Thomas and by most theologians, conceives the wounding of nature as relative only, i.e., by comparison with its primitive condition, while the latter view conceives it as absolute and visualises it as a worsening of comparison with the pure state of nature. According to the former view, the person who is born in original sin is to the human being in the pure state of nature as one stripped of his clothes is to the unclothed (nudatus ad undum); according to the latter view, as the sick person is to the healthy (agrotus ad sanum). The former view is to be preferred, as the sinful act of Adam, which occurred once only, could, neither in his own nature nor in the nature of his posterity, effect an evil habit and with it, a weakening of the natural powers. Cf. S. th. I II 85, 1. However, it must be admitted that fallen human nature, in consequence of individual and social aberrations, has declined below the state of pure nature.

§ 25. Souls who depart this life in the state of original sin are excluded from the Beatific Vision of God. (*De fide.*)

The 2nd General Council of Lyons (1274) and the Council of Florence (1438—45) declared: illorum animas, qui in actuali mortali peccato vel solo originali decedunt, mox in infernum descendere, poenis tamen disparibus puniendas (the souls of those who die in original sin as well as those who die in actual mortal sin go immediately into hell, but their punishment is very different). D 464, 693.

The dogma is supported by the words of Our Lord: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (John 3, 5).

§ 24. The Consequences of Original Sin

The consequences of original sin are, following Luke 10, 30, summarised by the scholastic theologians, in the axiom: By Adam's sin man is deprived of the supernatural gifts and wounded in his nature (spoliatus gratuitis, vulneratus in naturalibus). The word gratuita usually means only the absolute supernatural gifts and naturalia the gifts of integrity, which were part of man's abilities and powers before the fall. Cf. S. th. I II 85, 1; Sent. II d. 29 q. 12.2.

1. Loss of the Supernatural Endowment

In the state of original sin man is deprived of sanctifying grace and all that this implies, as well as of the preternatural gifts of integrity. (*De fide in regard to Sanctifying Grace and the Donum Immortalitatis.* D 788 et seq.)

The lack of the sanctifying grace has, as a turning away of man from God, the character of guilt and, as the turning of God away from man, the character of punishment. The lack of the gifts of integrity results in man's being subject to concupiscentia, suffering and death. These results remain even after the extirpation of Original Sin, not as punishment, but as the so-called poenalties, that is, as the means given to man to achieve the practice of virtue and moral integrity. The person stained by Original Sin finds himself in the imprisonment and slavery of the devil whom Jesus calls "the prince," and St. Paul "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4, 4). Cf. Hebr. 2, 14; Peter 2, 19.

2. Wounding of Nature

The wounding of nature must not be conceived, with the Reformers and the Jansenists, as the complete corruption of human nature. In the condition of Original Sin, man possesses the ability of knowing natural religious truths and of performing natural morally good actions. The Vatican Council

The spiritual re-birth of young infants can be achieved in an extra-sacramental manner through baptism by blood (cf. the baptism by blood of the children of Bethlechem). Other emergency means of baptism for children dying without sacramental baptism, such as prayer and desire of the parents or the Church (vicarious baptism of desire—Cajetan), or the attainment of the use of reason in the moment of death, so that the dying child can decide for or against God (baptism of desire—H. Klee), or suffering and death of the child as quasi-Sacrament (baptism of suffering—H. Schell), are indeed, possible, but their actuality cannot be proved from Revelation. Cf. D 712.

In the punishment of Hell theologians distinguish between the "poena damni," which consists in the exclusion from the Beatific Vision of God, and the "poena sensus" which is caused by external means, and which will be felt by the senses even after the resurrection of the body. While St. Augustine and many Latin Fathers are of the opinion that children dying in original sin must suffer "poena sensus" also, even if only a very mild one (mitissima omnium poena: Enchir. 93), the Greek Fathers (for example, St. Gregory of Nazianus, Or. 40, 23), and the majority of the Schoolmen and more recent theologians, teach that they suffer "poena damni" only. The declaration of Pope Innocent III, is in favour of this teaching: Poena originalis peccati est carentia visionis Dei (= poena damni) actualis vero poena peccati est gehennae perpetuae cruciatus (= poena sensus). D 410. A condition of natural bliss is compatible with "poena damni." Cf. St. Thomas, De malo, 5, 3; Sent. II d. 33 q. 2 a. 2.

Theologians usually assume that there is a special place or state for children dying without baptism which they call limbus puerorum (children's Limbo). Pope Pius VI adopted this view against the Synod of Pistoia. D 1526.

century) contain the confession: "I believe in life everlasting." D 6 and 9. Pope Benedict XII declared in the Dogmatic Constitution "Benedictus Deus" (1336), that the entirely pure souls enter Heaven, and behold the Divine Essence immediately and face to face, by the Divine Essence offering itself to them immediately, uncovered, clear and open, and that by reason of this vision and of this happiness they are truly blessed and have eternal life and eternal rest. D 530. Cf. D 40, 86, 693, 696.

The eschatology of the older Books of the Old Testament is imperfect. According to it the departed souls descend into the underworld (sheol) where they lead a gloomy joyless existence. However, the lot of the pious is better than that of the godless. From this there emerged the thought of retribution by God in the other world, which clearly appears in the later Books. The Psalmist hopes that God will liberate his soul from the underworld and be his lot for ever (Ps. 48, 16; 72, 26). Daniel attests the bodily resurrection to everlasting life, or to ignominy and eternal horror (12, 2). The martyrs of the times of the Maccabees drew comfort and strength from the hope of eternal life (2 Mach. 6, 26; 7, 29; 36). The Book of Wisdom describes the bliss and the peace of the souls of the just, who rest in the hand of God and live with Him forever (3, 1-9; 5, 16 et seq.).

Jesus vividly depicts the bliss of Heaven under the picture of a wedding feast (Mt. 25, 10; cf. Mt. 22, 1 et seq.; Luke 14, 15 et seq.) and calls it life or eternal life. Cf. Mt. 18, 8 et seq.; 19, 29; 25, 46; John 3, 15 et seq.; 4, 14; 5, 24; 6, 35-59; 10, 28; 12, 25; 17, 2. The condition for the achieving of life everlasting is the knowledge of God and of Christ: "Now this is eternal life: That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent" (John 17, 3). He promises the vision of God to the pure of heart: "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God" (Mt. 5, 8).

St. Paul stresses the mysterious character of the future bliss: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2, 9; cf. 2 Cor. 12, 4). As a reward, the just receive eternal life (Rom. 2, 7; 6, 22 et seq.) and a glory, which bears no relation to the sufferings of this world (Rom. 8, 18). The immediate vision of God takes the place of the imperfect knowledge of God in this world (1 Cor. 13, 12; 2 Cor. 5, 7).

It is a basic thought of Johannine theology that one attains to eternal life through belief in Jesus, the Messias and Son of God. Cf. John 3, 16, 36; 20, 31; 1 John 5, 13. Eternal life consists in the immediate vision of God. 1 John 3, 2: "We shall be like to him: because we shall see him as he is." The Secret Revelation places the bliss of the blessed in the communion of God and of the Lamb, that is, of the risen Christ. They are relieved from all physical evils. Cf. Apoc. 7, 9-17; 21, 3-7.

St. Augustine occupies himself minutely with the nature of the heavenly bliss. In his later works he erroneously conceived heavenly happiness to consist not alone in the spiritual but in the corporeal immediate vision of God. Cf. De civ. Dei XXII 29 et seq. Scholasticism stresses the absolute supernatural nature of the vision of God, which demands an altogether supernatural elevation of the intellect, the so-called *lumen glorie* (cf. Ps. 35, 10; Apoc.

§ 3. Heaven

1. Essential Bliss of Heaven

The souls of the just which in the moment of death are free from all guilt of sin and punishment for sin, enter into Heaven. (*De fide.*)

Heaven is a place and condition of perfect supernatural bliss, which consists in the immediate vision of God and in the perfect love of God associated with it.

The ancient Oriental Creed and the Apostles' Creed in its later version (fifth

The Doctrine of God the Consummator

22, 5), which makes glorified man capable of the act of the Vision of God. Cf. S. th. I 12, 4 and 5; D 475. Doctrine of God, Par. 6, 3 and 4. The acts which compose the heavenly blessedness are knowledge (*visio*), love (*amor*, *caritas*) and joy (*gaudium*, *fruitio*). The basic act is, according to Thomistic doctrine, knowledge; according to that of the Scotists, love. On the object of the beatific vision of God, see Doctrine of God, Par. 6, 2.

2. Accidental Blessedness of Heaven

In addition to the essential bliss of Heaven which springs from the immediate Vision of God, there is also an accidental blessedness, which proceeds from the natural knowledge and love of created things. (*Sent. communis.*)

An accidental bliss is achieved by the blessed in virtue of the community of life with Christ in His Human Form, with the Mother of God, and with the Angels and Saints; in virtue of their re-unification with families and former friends from their earthly life; in virtue of their knowledge of God's works. Further, the unification of the soul with the transfigured body at the Resurrection means an accidental increase of the glory granted to the Blessed in Heaven.

According to the teaching of the Schoolmen, three classes of the blessed receive, in addition to the essential bliss (*aurea*, sc. *corona*), a special reward for the transcendental victory gained by them, called *aureola*: virgins for their victory over the flesh in accordance with Apoc. 14, 4; martyrs for their victory over the world in accordance with Mt. 5, 11 et seq.; teachers of the faith for their victory over the devil, the father of lies, according to Dn. 12, 3 and Mt. 5, 19. According to St. Thomas the essence of the *aureola* consists in joy for the works performed by them in the battle against the enemies of salvation (Suppl. 96, 1). On the expression *aurea* cf. Apoc. 4, 4; 14, 4; for the expression *aureola* Ex. 25, 25.

3. Properties of Heaven

a) Eternity

The bliss of Heaven lasts for all eternity. (*De fide.*) Pope Benedict XII declared: "The vision and this enjoyment (of the Divine Essence) continues without interruption or diminution of the vision and enjoyment, and will continue until the General Judgment and thenceforth for all eternity." D 530.

Opposed to the teaching of the Church is Origen's doctrine of the moral mutability of the blessed. This includes the possibility of the diminution or the loss of bliss.

Jesus compares the reward for the good works with treasures in Heaven, which cannot be lost (Mt. 6, 20; Luke 12, 33). He who makes friends with the Mammon of iniquity will be taken up in the "eternal dwellings." Luke 16, 9. The just will enter "eternal life" (Mt. 25, 46; cf. Mt. 19, 29; Rom. 2, 7; John 3, 15 et seq.). St. Paul speaks of the eternal bliss under the picture of "an incorruptible crown" (1 Cor. 9, 25). St. Peter calls it "the incorruptible crown of glory" (1 Peter 5, 4).

§ 4. Hell

St. Augustine bases his proof of the eternal duration of heaven on the concept of perfect bliss: "How can one speak of true bliss, when confidence in its eternal duration is lacking?" (*De civ. Dei* XII 13, 1; cf. X 30; XI 13). The will of the blessed is strengthened by their intimate unification with God in love, in such a fashion that a separation by sin from God is morally impossible (moral impeccability).

b) Inequality of Reward

The degree of perfection of the beatific vision granted to the just is proportioned to each one's merits. (*De fide.*)

The Decretum pro Gracis of the Union Council of Florence (1439) declared: The souls of the perfectly just "clearly behold the Triune and One God as He is, but corresponding to the difference of their merits, the one more perfectly than the other." D 693. The Council of Trent defined that the justified person merits an increase of the heavenly glory by good works. D 842.

Opposed to the teaching of the Church is the teaching of Jovinian, who, influenced by the Stoics, taught that all virtues are of equal grade; opposed to it also is Luther's doctrine of the external imputation of Christ's justice. Both give rise to equality in the beatific vision.

Christ promised: "He (the Son of Man) will render to every one according to his works" (Mt. 16, 27). St. Paul teaches: "And every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour" (1 Cor. 3, 8). "He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he that soweth in blessings shall also reap blessings" (2 Cor. 9, 6). Cf. 1 Cor. 15, 41 et seq.

The Fathers are fond of appealing to the words of Jesus concerning the many mansions in the Father's House (John 14, 2). Tertullian remarks: "Why are there many mansions in the Father's house, if not on account of the difference of the merits?" (Scorp. 6). St. Augustine sees in the one penny which all the workers in the vineyard uniformly receive for varying durations of work (Mt. 20, 1-16), an indication of eternal life, which is for all similarly of eternal duration; in the many mansions in the house of the Father (John 14, 2) he sees a symbol of the various grades of remuneration in the one eternal life. To the objection that inequality gives rise to envy, he answers: "There will be no envy on account of the unequal glory, since the unity of love will reign in all" (In Ioan. tr. 67, 2). Cf. St. Jerome, Adv. Iovin. II 18-34. S. th. I 12, 6.

§ 4. Hell

1. The Reality of Hell

The souls of those who die in the condition of personal grievous sin enter Hell. (*De fide.*)

Hell is a place or state of eternal punishment inhabited by those rejected by God.

The reality of hell is contested by those sects which teach the total annihilation of the godless after death or after the General Judgment, and also by all who deny personal immortality (materialism).

The Athanasian Creed declares: "But those who have done evil will go into eternal fire." D 40. Benedict XII declared in the Dogmatic Constitution "Benedictus Deus": "According to God's general ordinance, the souls of those who die in a personal grievous sin descend immediately into hell, where they will be tormented by the pains of hell." D 531. Cf. D 429, 464, 693, 835, 840.

It is only in the Later Books that the Old Testament provides a clear assertion regarding the eternal punishment of the godless. According to Dn. 12, 2, they will rise again "unto reproach, to see it always." According to Judith 16, 20 et seq., the Lord the Almighty will take revenge on the enemies of Israel and will persecute them on the Day of Judgment. "For He will give fire, and worms into their flesh, that they may burn, and may feel forever (that they cry with pain)." Cf. Is. 66, 24. According to Wisdom 4, 19, the godless shall "be a reproach among the dead forever"; "They shall be in sorrow and their memory shall perish." Cf. 3, 10; 6, 5 et seq. Jesus threatens sinners with the punishment of hell. He calls it Gehenna (Mt. 5, 29 et seq.; 10, 28; 23, 15, 33; Mk. 9, 43, 45, 47 originally = valley of Hinnom), Hell of the fire (Mt. 5, 22; 18, 9), Hell where the worm does not die and the fire is not extinguished (Mk. 9, 46 et seq.), everlasting fire (Mt. 25, 41), unquenchable fire (Mt. 3, 12; Mk. 9, 42), furnace of fire (Mt. 13, 42, 50), everlasting pain (Mt. 25, 46). There will be darkness there (Mt. 8, 12; 22, 13; 25, 30), wailing and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 13, 42, 50; 24, 51; Luke 13, 28). St. Paul attests: "They (who do not know God and do not obey the Gospel) shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction, from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1, 9). Cf. Rom. 2, 6-9; Hebr. 10, 26-31. According to Apoc. 21, 8, the godless "shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone"; there "they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (20, 10). Cf. 2 Peter 2, 6; Jud. 7.

The Fathers unanimously attest the reality of hell. According to St. Ignatius of Antioch, the person who "corrupts the faith of God, for which Jesus Christ was crucified, by evil teaching, will go into the unquenchable fire; and so will the person who listens to him" (Eph. 16, 2). St. Justin bases the punishment of hell on the idea of the Divine justice, which does not allow those who transgress the law to escape free (Apol. II 9). Cf. Apol. I 8, 4; 21, 6; 28. Martyrium Polycarpi 2, 3; 11, 2. St. Irenaeus, Adv. haer. IV 28, 2.

2. Nature of the Punishment of Hell

Scholasticism distinguishes a double element in the punishment of hell: the poena damni (pain of loss) and the poena sensus (pain of sense). The former corresponds to the aversion from God inherent in grievous sin, the latter the conversion to the creature.

The poena damni, which is the essence of the punishment of hell, consists in exclusion from the Beatific Vision. Cf. Mt. 25, 41: "Depart from me you cursed!" Mt. 25, 12: "I know you not!" 1 Cor. 6, 9: "Know you not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God?" Luke 13, 27; 14, 24; Apoc. 22, 15. St. Augustine, Enchir. 112.

Poena Sensus consists in the suffering which is caused by outside material things (it is also called the positive punishment of hell). The Holy Scriptures speak often of the fire of hell, to which the damned are consigned; they describe hell as a place where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth—a picture of sorrow and of despair.

The fire of hell was conceived by individual Fathers such as Origen and St. Gregory of Nyssa, and by later Theologians, like Ambrosius Catharinus, J. A. Mohler and H. Klec, in a metaphorical sense as a symbol for purely spiritual pains, especially for the torments of the gnawing of conscience. This opinion has not been formally condemned by the Church. The majority of the Fathers, the Schoolmen and the majority of modern theologians believe it to be a physical fire, but stress the difference between this fire and ordinary fire. St. Thomas, following the precedent of St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great, explains the effect of physical fire on a purely spiritual essence as a binding of the spirits to material fire, which acts as an instrument of the Divine penal justice. Through it the spirits are made subject to matter and hindered in their free movement. Suppl. 70, 3. For an explanation of the reply of the S. Penitentiary of 30-4-1890 regarding the question of hell-fire (Cavallera 1466) cf. H. Lange, Schol. 6 (1931) 89 et seq.

3. Properties of Hell

a) Eternity

The punishment of Hell lasts for all eternity. (*De fide.*)

The Caput Firmiter of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) declares: "Those (the rejected) will receive a perpetual punishment with the devil." D 429. Cf. D 40, 835, 840. A Synod at Constantinople (543) rejected the Apocatastasis doctrine of Origen. D 211.

While Origen denied the eternity of hell-punishment altogether, H. Schell (1906) limited it to those who sin "with raised hand," that is, from the disposition of hatred for God, and who persist in this disposition in the other world.

Holy Writ frequently emphasises the eternal duration of hell-punishment by speaking of it as an "eternal reproach" (Dn. 12, 2; cf. Wis. 4, 19); an "eternal fire" (Judith 16, 21; Mt. 18, 8; 25, 41; Judith 7), an "everlasting punishment" (Mt. 25, 46), an "eternal punishment in destruction" (2 Thess. 1, 9). That the word "eternal" is not to be understood in the sense of a duration which is indeed long, but limited is proved by parallel expressions like "unquenchable fire" (Mt. 3, 12; Mk. 9, 43), or Hell, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished" (Mk. 9, 45 et seq.); as well as by the contrast of "everlasting punishment" — "Life everlasting in Mt. 25, 46. According to Apoc. 14 (19, 3), "the smoke of their torments (of the damned) shall ascend up for ever and ever," that is, without end. Cf. Apoc. 20, 10.

The "restitution of all things" announced in Acts 3, 21, does not refer to the lot of the damned, but to the renewal of the world which is to take place on the coming-again of Christ.

The Fathers before Origen unanimously affirm the eternal duration of the

punishment of hell. Cf. St. Ignatius, Eph. 16, 2; St. Justin, Apol. I 28. I. Martyrium Polycarpi 2, 3; 2: St. Irenaeus, Adv. haer. IV 28, 2; Tertullian, De poenit. 12. Origen's denial proceeded from the Platonic doctrinal opinion that the purpose of all punishment is the improvement of the delinquent. Origen was followed by St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Didymus of Alexandria and Evagrius Ponticus. St. Augustine defends the endless duration of hell-punishment against the Origenists and against "the merciful ones" (St. Ambrose), who, in view of the Divine mercy, taught the restoration of Christians who died in mortal sin. Cf. De civ. Dei XXI 23; Ad Orosium 6, 7; Enchir. 112.

On the ground of the teaching of Revelation it is to be inferred, that the will of the damned is immovably hardened in evil and is, therefore, inaccessible to any true repentance. The reason is that God refuses all further grace to the damned. Cf. S. th. I II 85, 2 ad 3; Suppl. 98, 2. 5. 6.

b) Inequality of Punishment

The punishment of the damned is proportioned to each one's guilt. (*Sent. communis.*)

The Union Councils of Lyons and of Florence declared that the souls of the damned are punished with unequal punishments (*poenis tamen disparibus puniendas*). D 464, 693. This is probably intended to assert not merely a specific difference in the punishment of original sin (*poena damni*) and of personal sins (*poena damni* and *poena sensus*), but also a difference in the degree of punishment for personal sins.

Jesus threatens the inhabitants of Corazain and Bethsaida, on account of their slowness to repent, with a stricter judgment than the dwellers in Tyre and Sidon (Mt. 11, 22). The Scribes are to be subject to a particularly strict judgment (Luk. 20, 47).

St. Augustine teaches: "In their wretchedness the lot of some of the damned will be more tolerable than that of others" (*Enchir. 111*). Justice demands that the punishment be commensurate with the guilt.

§ 5. Purgatory

1. Reality of Purgatory

a) Dogma

The souls of the just which, in the moment of death, are burdened with venial sins or temporal punishment due to sins, enter Purgatory. (*De fide.*)

The cleansing fire (*purgatorium*) is a place and state of temporal penal purification.

The reality of purgatory was denied by the Cathari, the Waldenses, the Reformers and by some of the schismatic Greeks. On Luther's teaching, cf. the Schmalcaldic Article, Pars. II. Art. II, Sec. 12-15; on Calvin's teaching,

Instit. III 5, 6-10; on the teaching of the Greek Orthodox Church the Confessio Orthodoxa of Petrus Mogilas, P.I., q. 64-66 (revised by Meletios Syrigos), and the Confessio of Dositheos, Decr. 18.

Against the schismatic Greeks whose objection was chiefly directed against a special place of purification, the Union Councils of Lyons and of Florence uphold the purifying fire and the expiatory character of the penal sufferings: "The souls of those who depart this life with true repentance and in the love of God, before they have rendered satisfaction for their trespasses and negligences by the worthy fruits of penance, are purified after death with the punishments of purification." D 464, 693. Cf. D 456, 570 s. Against the Reformers, who asserted that the doctrine of the cleansing fire is contrary to Holy Writ (cf. D 777), and also rejected it from the standpoint of their doctrine of justification, the Council of Trent laid down the reality of the cleansing fire and the value of the suffrages performed for the poor souls: *purgatorium esse animasque ibi detentas fidelium suffragiis . . . iuvare*. D 983. Cf. D 840, 998.

b) Scriptural proof

Holy Writ teaches the existence of the cleansing fire indirectly, by admitting the possibility of a purification in the other world. According to 2 Mach. 12, 42-46, the Jews prayed for their fallen on whom had been found donaries of the idols, that their sins might be forgiven them. Then they sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered in expiation. Therefore they were convinced that they could help the dead by prayer and sacrifice to be freed from their sins. The sacred writer approves this course: "Because he (Judas) considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."

The Words of the Lord in Mt. 12, 32: "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come," leaves open the possibility that sins are forgiven not only in this world but in the world to come. St. Gregory the Great comments: "In this sentence it is given to understand that many sins can be remitted in this world, but also many in the world to come" (*Dial. IV 39*). Cf. St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei XXI 24, 2*. D 456.

In I Cor. 3, 12 St. Paul asserts: The work of the Christian teacher of faith who continues to build on the foundation, which is Christ, but in doing so uses wood, hay and straw, that is, performs bad work, will not stand when it is tested in the fire on the last day. V. 15: "If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss: yet he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire," that is, in the manner of a man who, in the catastrophe of a conflagration, loses everything and barely saves his life. The Apostle is speaking of a transient punishment of the Day of the General Judgment, probably consisting of severe tribulations after which the final salvation will take place. The Latin Fathers take the passage to mean a transient purification punishment in the sense of a physical fire. Cf. St. Augustine, *Enarr.* in Ps. 37, 3; *Caesarius of Arles, Sermo 179*.

The words of Mt. 5, 26: "Amen, I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence (from the prison) till thou repay the last farthing." threaten, in the form of a Parable, the person who does not fulfil the commandment of Christian brotherly love, with just punishment by the Divine Judge. Through further interpretation of the Parable, a time-limited condition of punishment in the other world began to be seen expressed in the time-limited punishment of the prison. Tertullian understands by the prison the underworld, and by "the last farthing" the petty transgressions which must be expiated there by the postponement of the resurrection (to the millennial kingdom). (De anima 58.) Cf. St. Cyprian, Ep. 55, 20.

c) Proof from Tradition

The main proof for the existence of the cleansing fire lies in the testimony of the Fathers. The Latin Fathers especially employ the scriptural passages cited frequently as proofs for a transient purification-punishment and a forgiveness of sins in the other world. St. Cyprian teaches that penitents who die before the reception of the reconciliation must perform the remainder of any atonement demanded in the other world, while martyrdom counts as full atonement: "To be tormented in long pains and to be cleansed and purified from one's sins by continuous fire, is a different thing from expiating one's sins all at once by the suffering (of martyrdom)" (Ep. 55, 20). St. Augustine distinguishes between temporal punishments which must be expiated in this life, and those which must be expiated after death: "Some suffer temporal punishments only in this life, others only after death, still others both in life and after death, but always before this most strict and most final court" (De civ. Dei XXI 13). He frequently refers to an improving and cleansing fire (ignis emendatorius ignis purgatorius; cf. Enarr. in Ps. 37, 3: Enchir. 69). According to his teaching, suffrages benefit those who are born again in Christ, and have not lived such good lives that they can dispense with such help after death, but not such bad lives that such help is no longer of any avail to them, that is to say, to an intermediate group between the blessed and the damned (Enchir. 110; De civ. Dei XXI 24, 2). Ancient Christian grave inscriptions beseech peace and quickening for the dead.

Speculatively, the existence of the cleansing fire can be derived from the concept of the sanctity and justice of God. The former demands that only completely pure souls be assumed into Heaven (Apoc. 21, 27); the latter demands that the punishments of sins still present be effected, but, on the other hand, forbids that souls that are united in love with God should be cast into hell. Therefore, an intermediate state is to be assumed, whose purpose is final purification and which for this reason is of limited duration. Cf. St. Thomas, Sent. IV d. 21 q. 1 a. 1 q. 1; S.c.G IV 91.

2. The Nature of the Punishment of the Cleansing Fire

On the analogy of the punishment of hell a distinction is made between poena damni and the poena sensus.

Poena damni consists in the temporary exclusion from the beatific vision of God. On the ground of the special judgment which has gone before, it is, however, associated with the certainty of the final beatification (D 778). The poor souls are conscious that they are children and friends of God and long for the most intimate unification with Him. Thus the temporary separation is all the more painful to them.

To the poena damni is added, according to the general teaching of the theologians,

a poena sensus. The Latin Fathers, the Schoolmen, and many theologians of modern times, in view of 1 Cor. 3, 15, assume a physical fire. However, the biblical foundation for this is inadequate. Out of consideration for the separated Greeks, who reject the notion of a purifying fire, the official declarations of the Councils speak only of purifying punishments (poena purgatoriae), not of purifying fire. D 464, 693. Cf. S. Thomas, Sent. IV d. 21 a. 1 a. 1 q. 3.

3. Object of the Purification

The remission of the venial sins which are not yet remitted, occurs, according to the teaching of St. Thomas (De male, 7, 11), as it does in this life, by an act of contrition deriving from charity and performed with the help of grace. This act of contrition, which is presumably awakened immediately after entry into the purifying fire, does not, however, effect the abrogation or the diminution of the punishment for sins, since in the other world there is no longer any possibility of merit.

The temporal punishments for sins are atoned for in the purifying fire by the so-called suffering of atonement (satispassio), that is, by the willing bearing of the expiatory punishments imposed by God.

4. Duration of the Purifying Fire

The purifying fire will not continue after the General Judgment. (Sent. Communis.)

According to the judgment of the Judge of the World (Mt. 25, 34-41), there will be only two states, Heaven and hell. St. Augustine says: "Let purification punishments be counted on only before that last and terrible judgment" (De civ. Dei XXI 16; XXI 13). As to the length of the purification process for the individual souls, nothing can be said in terms of years. Cf. D 1143.

For the individual souls the purifying fire endures until they are free from all guilt and punishment. Immediately on the conclusion of the purification they will be assumed into the bliss of Heaven. D 530, 693

CHAPTER 2

Eschatology of the Whole of Mankind

§ 6. The Second Coming of Christ

1. Reality of the Second Coming

At the end of the world Christ will come again in glory to pronounce judgment. (De fide.)

The Apostles' Creed confesses: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." The other Creeds agree with this. The Nicæno-Constantinople Creed adds: "in glory." D 86. Cf. D 49, 54, 287, 429.

Jesus repeatedly clearly foretold His second coming (parousia) at the end of the world. Mt. 16, 27 (Mk. 8, 38; Luke 9, 26): "The Son of Man shall