

*adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest, perhaps, the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officers, and thou be cast into prison. Amen I say to thee thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing*" (St. Math. v. 25-26). These are the words of God, Eternal Truth Himself. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, 3, v. 15, following his Divine Master, the Apostle of the Gentiles, declares the same doctrine in these memorable words, "*Other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid; which is Christ Jesus. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: Every man's work shall be manifest, for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon: he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire.*" Now this cannot be the fire of earth, nor of heaven, nor of hell, it must be in the purifying flames of Purgatory. This interpretation is the unanimous voice of Christendom, made known to us by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, from the cradle of her existence down to our own times. And, asks the illustrious Cardinal Gibbons, in his admirable work, "The Faith of our Fathers," shall we submit to have the time-honoured marks of Christian faith ruthlessly removed by discontented men, who, impatient of religious yoke, reject the doctrine of Purgatory sixteen hundred years after the birth of Christianity, when alone they appeared on the stage? Whom should we follow? To know the meaning of some legal point would you not think it more reasonable to follow the decision of our best jurists than that of some political demagogue or rebellious criminal who could bring neither learning, nor authority, nor history to support his obviously wicked purpose? Should not a like motive which urges us to reject the opinions of ignorant politicians or depraved criminals, and embrace that of learned jurists on a constitutional question impel us to cast aside novelties or religious innovators, and follow the unanimous teaching of the Fathers of primitive Christianity on the great subject of Purgatory?

Let us go back to the earliest ages and ask what was the Catholic belief and practice on this dogma of Purgatory. Tertullian, who died about the year 240, says, "The faithful wife will pray for the soul of her departed husband, particularly on the anniversary day of his falling asleep, and if she fail to do so she hath repudiated her husband as far as in her lies."

In several of his writings, Origen unmistakably proves the teaching of the early Church on the doctrine of Purgatory. He tells us that they believed it to be a temporary state in which certain souls are detained till they are thoroughly purified and fitted for heaven.

Describing the funeral of Constantine the Great, Eusebius, the historian, says, in the fourth century, that the body of the prince was laid on a lofty bier, and the ministers of God, and the multitude of the people with tears and much lamentation, offered up prayers and sacrifices for the repose of his soul. He adds that this was done according to the desires of this pious monarch, who had erected in Constantinople the great church in honour of the Apostles, so that after his death the faithful might remember him therein. In the same century St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, writes:—"We commemorate the holy Fathers, Bishops, and all who have fallen asleep amongst us, believing that the supplications which we present, will be of great assistance to their souls." To those who might be tempted to doubt the efficacy of prayer for the dead, he says: "If a king had banished certain persons who had offended him, and their relations having woven a crown should offer it to him in behalf of those under his vengeance, would he not grant a respite to their punishment? So we, in offering up a crown of prayers, in behalf of those who have fallen asleep, will obtain for them forgiveness through the merits of Jesus Christ." Does not this imply that those for whom prayers are offered are in a state of torment? In other words, is it not the same as the modern Catholic doctrine of Purgatory? In the same century St. Ephrem says: "I conjure you, my brethren and friends, in the name of that God Who commands me leave you, to remember me when you assemble to pray. Do not bury me with perfumes. Give them not to me but to God. Me conceived in sorrows, bury with lamentations, and instead

of perfumes, assist me with your prayers. For the dead are benefitted by the prayers of the living saints." In nearly one hundred of his funeral pangeries, the same Holy Father speaks of the Christian duty of praying for the dead. In his sermon on the death of the Emperors Gratian and Valentinian, St. Ambrose says: "Blessed shall both of you be if my prayers can aught avail. No day shall pass you over in silence. No prayer of mine shall omit to honour you. No night shall hurry by without bestowing on you a mention in my prayers. In every one of the oblations will I remember you." On the death of Theodosius he thus ends a beautiful prayer for his soul: "I loved him, and therefore will I follow him to the land of the living. Nor will I leave him till, by tears and prayers, I shall lead him unto the holy mount of the Lord, where is life undying, where corruption is not, nor sighs nor mourning." St. Chrysostom says: "It was not without good reason, ordained by the Apostles, that mention should be made of the dead, in the tremendous Mysteries, for they well knew that these would derive great benefit therefrom."

In the 9th book of his Confessions, St. Augustine tells us that his mother was at the point of death when she made him this last request: "Lay this body anywhere. Let not the care of it in any way disturb you. This only I beg of you, that you remember me at the altar of the Lord, wherever you be." Listen, dearly beloved in Christ, to the impassioned words in which this great Doctor, one of the loftiest geniuses the world ever saw, prays for his dear departed mother. "O God of my heart, I now beseech Thee for the sins of my mother. Hear me through the merits of the wounds that hung upon the wood of the Cross. May she then be in peace with her husband. And do Thou, O Lord, inspire Thy servants, my brethren, whom with voice and heart and pen I serve, that as many as shall read these lines may remember at thy altar Monica, thy servant."

"The souls of the dead," says the gentle St. Bernard, "dwell in three different abodes, according to the difference of their merits, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. In Purgatory they undergo expiatory sufferings which dispose to redemption."

With the light of civilization and Christianity St. Augustine, who was sent into England by St. Gregory the Great, taught our Saxon forefathers the honour and invocation of saints and devotion to the dead. St. Patrick did the same in faithful Ireland. In those far away lands at home splendid architectural piles, churches, and chantries, monasteries and convents were built and endowed by their founders for the especial purpose that prayers and Masses should be offered in them for ever in behalf of the donors when departed. This is more than enough to show that far from being a new-fangled view, the doctrine of Purgatory and prayers for the dead were enforced in the earliest and what are called the purest ages of the Church.

The most illustrious Fathers and Doctors of the Church treated this beautiful doctrine not as a purely theoretical principle, but as an imperative duty, an act of daily piety, which should be, as, in fact, it was in the early ages of faith, embodied in the daily exercises of devotion. The dear departed were prayed for morning and night in the Divine Office, in the Holy Sacrifice at which our Catholic forefathers made it a duty to assist every day of their lives. On Sundays they did what we do to-day—they asked the prayers of the congregation for the souls of the Faithful Departed. In excavating the Roman catacombs many most interesting inscriptions have been brought to light. Many most touching in their pious simplicity implore peace and rest, and prayers for those over whose sepulchre the inscriptions had been placed. They are speaking memorials proclaiming that the Church of God, at the very cradle of her existence, taught her children, as she teaches them to-day, to offer up fervent prayers in behalf of the dead.

The beautiful doctrine of Purgatory, together with the practice of praying for the dead, is embodied in all the most ancient Liturgies of the world. In the fourth and fifth centuries the heresiarchs Arius, Nestorius, and Eutyches snatched countless souls from the centre of unity which had hitherto and happily united the Churches in the East and in the West. The sects founded by these wretched apostates have since formed many distinct communities, separating from the one and only Catholic Church in the