

The justice of God demands that there should be a purgatory. God could not condemn to everlasting punishment those who die guilty of little sins only, or who have not perfectly satisfied His retributive and vindictive justice for their past transgressions; forgiven as to the guilt and eternal punishment in the sacrament of penance; there must, therefore, be a middle place between heaven and hell, where such souls may be cleansed and purified before their final admission into heavenly bliss, and this place is purgatory, which was firmly believed by all Christian antiquity, and is still believed by all Christians all over the world, except by most of the Reformed Churches. "When a Christian dies," says St Denis the Aeropagite, "the Venerable Pontiff says the prayer for the dead, that through the Divine clemency, he may be received into heavenly light and the land of the living, all the sins which, through human frailty he had committed, being forgiven him." "*Acedens venerandus Antistes preceam sacram super mortuum peragit; precatur divinam clementiam, ut cuncta dimittat per infirmitatem humanam admissa peccata defuncto, cumque in luce statuat et regione vivorum*" (Dion. De Eccles. Hier. C. vii). In the Apostolical constitutions, we read: "We pray for our brethren who are resting in the Lord, that He may forgive them every sin, and, through His kindness and benevolence, place them in the region of the living." "*Oremus pro fratribus nostris, qui in Christo requieverunt ut Deus qui animam defuncti suscepit, remittat ei omne peccatum, et propitiis ac benevolus ei factus, colloset eum in regione vivorum*" (Apost. Constat. L. viii, C. xli). "We hold," says St Clement, "that fire purges and sanctifies sinful souls." "*Nos dicimus ignem sanctificare animas peccatrices*" (Clement Strom L. vii, C. vi). Which sinful souls are purged and sanctified by fire, according to St Clement? Not those which die in mortal sin, and are lost for ever, but those which, for small transgressions, are being cleansed in purgatory. Tertullian informs us that in his time, through an immemorial custom, a collection was made from door to door, and the proceeds sent to the Bishop, to have it distributed among his priests and have Masses said for the repose of the faithful departed (Tert. De Cor. Mil). "*Oblationes pro defunctis annua die facimus,*" and "Hermas in the II. Vision of the I. Book of his pastor, confirms what we said. We have also the testimony of Origen, St Cyprian, Lactantius, St Cyril of Jerusalem, etc." (St Cyp. Ep. LII. ad Anton, Lactant Institut. l. vii, C. XXI., Origen, Hom. XVI. in. Jerem. S. Cyr. Hier. Cat. v. Mystagon 9). "The evidence of the early Christian Fathers in favour of purgatory and prayers for the dead is simply unanswerable; this is why the innovators of the Sixteenth Century rejected the authority of the Fathers and tradition, because it manifestly condemned their false doctrines, which were contrary to the belief and practice of all ages, past and gone, from the days of the apostles. Let me ask you candidly, if their innovations were not rather a deformation than a reformation of the Christian religion. I do not wish to offend any one in so speaking, but truth, though at times bitter and painful, must be told, because unless people see clearly that they have been deceived and led astray by false views and gross misrepresentations of the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, they will remain as they are, and the mischief done by the reformers will be continued. If you saw a traveller taking a wrong road, you would consider it an act of kindness to warn him of his mistake, because if he went on, the more he would advance, the more he would recede from the place of his destination; in like manner, is it not a true act of charity and kindness to warn, in a friendly manner, those who, innocently, have embraced a false religion, which they thought to be the right one? Does not our Blessed Lord tell us that he who will convert a sinner from the error of his way shall save his soul, and shine like a star throughout the endless eternity? "*Qui converti fecerit peccatorem ab errore viae suae salvabit animam ejus*" (Jac. v. 20). "*Qui ad justitiam erudiunt multos fulgebunt quasi stellae in perpetuas aeternitates*" (Dan. xii, 3). St Augustin, summing up the tradition of the early Christian ages, has written a whole book on the care of the dead, the existence of purgatory, and prayers for the souls of the faithful departed. He declares that the custom of praying for the dead, as sanctioned by the Church, is spread everywhere, that it is an immemorial, constant, and universal practice, which can be traced back to the very times of the apostles (St Aug., Liber., *De Cura pro Mortuis*). This dogma, besides, is so consoling and so much in harmony with the aspirations of our reason, that it is hard to conceive how any one should have any difficulty to admit it. In order to understand the doctrine of the Catholic Church about purgatory, we must remember that which we have already so often repeated, namely—that in forgiving the guilt and eternal punishment due to grievous sins committed after baptism, there generally remains a temporal punishment which must be paid either in this world by the penitent himself, or in purgatory. God has so ordained it, lest by too great an indulgence sinners might be emboldened in doing wrong, and that by the temporal punishment they have to perform, in order to repair the past, they might not only satisfy His divine justice, but be more prudent and careful for the future to avoid every wilful sin, and also the dangerous occasions which might lead them into sin, and be stimulated to acquire more merits for heaven. The pains of the souls in purgatory are twofold: (1), The pain and loss; and (2), The pain of sense. 1. The pain of

Loss.—It is the temporary privation of the sight of God and of the company of the holy angels and saints. No sooner has a soul departed this life than it beholds God. This sight of God produces in the soul so deep and vivid an impression of the surpassing beauty, loveliness, charms and perfection of the Divine Majesty, that thenceforth it is utterly incapable of thinking or loving aught else except the Divine transcendental beauty and loveliness of the Almighty; it thirsts, its pants for God, it yearns after Him, like a hart after a fountain of limpid waters. It cries out unceasingly: God! God! God! I long to be with God! This temporary separation from, and privation of the sight of God, is for the unfortunate soul a cause of most intense grief. But it knows it cannot possibly go to God and be admitted into His presence until it be perfectly cleansed and purified, spotless and immaculate; and the thought that it is through carelessness and negligence, whilst on earth, that it is, for a while, deprived of the Beatific Vision, of the joys of Paradise, and of the most agreeable and charming company of the Blessed Virgin, and the holy angels and saints, greatly increases its grief and anguish; yet it is perfectly resigned to the Divine will, and would not wish to appear in the presence of the infinite, uncreated beauty, and the glorious assembly of all the brilliant court of heaven without every stain or defilement, even the smallest, being removed from it. It is hard for us here below to fully realise the intensity of this pain of loss, because our ideas of the Divine beauty, of the glory of the inhabitants of heaven and of the delights of that lovely abode are so dense and imperfect; it is not so with the souls in purgatory, which fully comprehend that to lose God even for a moment is a loss which no earthly thing could compensate. However, they are greatly consoled by the certainty they have that this privation is to be only a temporary one, and that they may be helped and assisted by the prayers and good works of the faithful on earth, especially by the oblation of the adorable sacrifice of the Mass, as has been defined by the Council of Trent, we have quoted above. The opinion of Luther that all the souls in purgatory are not certain of their salvation has been condemned by Leo X. (Bulla in 1520, edita Prop. Lutheri xxxviii. *Animae in purgatorio non sunt securae de earum salute, saltem omnes*) The same Pontiff has condemned another proposition of Martin Luther, who said "That the souls in purgatory had a horror of their pains, and continually sinned in trying to obtain final rest—(*Animae in purgatorio peccant sine intermissione, quamdiu quaerunt requiem, et horrent poenas*)—(Propos. xxxix, Lutheri damnata a Leone x, 1520). It is, therefore, the Catholic belief that the souls in purgatory are perfectly resigned to their state, never give way to impatience or murmuring, and adore the just decree of the Divine Majesty, although they are most anxious that we should intercede for them, and most grateful to us for any alleviation we obtain for them from Almighty God by our humble supplications and the good works we offer to Jesus for their intention. According to St Thomas (1 Pars., Tit. v., C. v.), Venerable Bede (Beda Sermo xviii, De Sancto), Suarez (Tract. De Purgat. Sect. iii), the pain of loss far surpasses anything we can endure in this world. Bellarmine (Bellarminus C. xiv.), St Bonaventure (St Bonavent. In iv, Dist. xx, art. i, Question. 2.) and a few others do not believe that the pain of loss surpasses anything we may suffer in this world. The opinion of the angelic doctor is the most probable and the one generally followed; yet those who hold the other opinion could not be condemned because the Church has defined nothing about this point.

(To be Continued.)

A SHORT REPLY TO THE REVEREND JOHN DICKSON, PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER, TEMUKA, TO HIS ATTACK AGAINST THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

(By the VERY REV FATHER THOPHILUS LE MENNANT DES CHESNAIS, S.M.)

Temuka, December 17, 1895.

THE following letter was refused publication by the editor of the *Temuka Leader* :—

If we were to judge of the Reverend John Dickson's intellectual attainments by the letter which appeared in the last number of your paper (*Temuka Leader*) we should indeed form a very low estimate of them. Hear his wonderful utterances :—(1) "All Protestants stand or fall by the Bible, as we find it in the original Hebrew or Greek, or, at least, as we have it translated from the original tongues into our own, with all the light and knowledge of the nineteenth century." Does the Rev John Dickson forget that our Blessed Lord, the Divine Founder of the Christian Church, has not written a single word of the Bible? That even after the coming down of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, the Apostles established Christianity by oral teaching, and, for many years, not one of them wrote a line, because they did not consider it necessary? They preached the Divinity of Jesus Christ and confirmed their preaching with miracles. Can the Rev J. Dickson deny this? Can he point out one single early Christian Church which was established or converted by the diffusion or reading of the Holy Scriptures? It was nearly four hundred years before the Bible was collected together and put into

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