

***The Purpose of Purgatory:
Expiation or Maturation?***

A BTh Dissertation

Gareth Leyshon

2nd March, 2005

St John's Seminary, Wonersh

BTh (Hons): THC01 — Dissertation

Word Count: 10,781

Supervisor: Revd Dr Stephen Dingley

Preparatory supervisor: Revd Dr Anthony Barratt

The Purpose of Purgatory: Expiation or Maturation?

CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction	3
Chapter 2: Doctrinal Statements	6
Chapter 3: The Constraints of Doctrine	12
Chapter 4: The Contribution of Scripture and Tradition	16
Chapter 5: Purgatory: A Description and a Critique	40
Chapter 6: Conclusion	49
Bibliography	50

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

The author would like to thank the Revd Dr Stephen Dingley for his extensive assistance and suggestions in preparing this dissertation; the Revd Dr Anthony Barratt for his guidance in specifying the topic; Sr M. Finbarr Coffey and Mr Sean O’Connor for their pro-active encouragement in suggesting useful sources; and Mr Behruz Raf’at for his insight into the Divine Mercy.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that Purgatory is a **purification**. In the context of its principal teaching on Purgatory,¹ the *Catechism* does not specify that this purification is a punishment (indeed, paragraph 1031 makes an explicit contrast with the punishment of the damned), but briefly affirms the Church's tradition of granting indulgences in suffrage for the dead. It allows that the purification is traditionally spoken of as a 'cleansing fire'.

Elsewhere,² however, the *Catechism* treats more fully of indulgences, and does speak of the temporal punishment due to sin. There are clearly two concepts associated with this 'temporal punishment':

The more explicit definition stated in paragraph 1472 asserts that every sin committed indicates some unhealthy attachment to creatures (meaning created things, that is, things less than God Himself). Therefore, a soul must be totally purified of such attachments and the appropriate purification satisfies the 'temporal punishment' due to each sin. In this case, the purification would appear to be identified with **maturation**, which of its very nature is part of the development of an individual soul.

The following paragraphs, however, use 'temporal punishment' in a way which indicates the more usual connotations of the word 'punishment', as a penalty justly³ imposed, and develops the 'economic' idea of how our prayerful works can assist those in Purgatory. The implicit definition of the

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (hereafter CCC), 1030-1032.

² CCC 1471-1479.

³ The penalty is justly deserved, and 'follows from the nature of sin' (CCC 1472); it must not be interpreted as retribution exacted by a vengeful God.

punishment here would seem to be an *expiation*,⁴ which must be paid off to clear an objective debt, but in which the whole communion of saints potentially co-operates and contributes.

Is it possible for a ‘temporal punishment’ to be at one and the same time a personal detachment from created things *and* a corporate fine, or is one term doing duty for two incommensurable concepts in different theological domains?

In this dissertation I propose to explore how Purgatory should be understood in the 21st Century, in the light of the development of doctrine and a careful exegesis of Scripture. Particular attention will be paid to New Testament texts which have not previously been treated in any depth as theological loci for this topic, especially dominical sayings about the person who shall not get out until they have paid the last penny.⁵ This is not a discussion of *whether* Purgatory exists, since it is framed within the paradigm of Catholic theology which accepts the Magisterial teaching that there is a Purgatory.⁶ Neither is this a history of ideas about Purgatory, except insofar as historical context is necessary to understand the literal sense of Scripture and the weight of dogmatic statements of the Magisterium. Nor is it a search to find a new, more culturally relevant, metaphor.⁷ Rather, our methodology shall be to establish what *must*, what

⁴ That sins are expiated in Purgatory is explicitly stated in CCC 1475; the same understanding of the meaning of ‘temporal punishment’ is implicit throughout paragraphs 1473-1479.

⁵ Mt 5:26, 18:23-35, Lk 12:59.

⁶ Relevant dogmatic statements will be identified in the following chapter.

⁷ For attempts in this direction, see F. Seibel, ‘Purgatory: An Interpretation’, R. Schreier, ‘Purgatory: In Quest of an Image’, G. L. Müller, “Purgatory”, and D. Kendall, ‘The Perpetual Light of Peace’.

may, and what *cannot* be said about Purgatory in the light first of binding doctrinal statements, secondly of the Deposit of Faith, in order to reach a synthesis; this may then be compared with, and informed by, contemporary theological viewpoints, not all of which are framed within a Catholic paradigm.

Chapter 2: Doctrinal Statements

This dissertation presupposes that the Catholic Church enjoys a God-given authority to pronounce upon the truth of theological statements, and the correct interpretation of Scripture and Tradition.⁸ Therefore compatibility with Magisterial statements is a criterion of truth, as long as care is taken to avoid unwarranted assumptions about the meaning or level of authority of such statements. Since our current project is to understand Purgatory in the light of the development of doctrine, it is appropriate to start by identifying which teaching documents apply.⁹

In 1336 Pope Benedict XII acted to resolve a controversy inflamed by his predecessor, John XXII, about whether the souls in heaven enjoy the Beatific Vision while awaiting their resurrection.¹⁰ He promulgated the Constitution *Benedictus Deus*:

By this Constitution which is to remain in force for ever, we, with apostolic authority, define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints who departed from this world before the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and also of the ... faithful who died after receiving the holy baptism of Christ — provided they were not in need of any purification when they died, or will not be in need of any when they die in the future, or else, if they then needed or will need some purification, after they have been purified after death — and again the souls of children who have been reborn by the same baptism of Christ or will be when baptism is conferred on them, if they die before attaining the use of free will: all these souls, immediately after death and, in the case of those in need of purification, after the purification mentioned above, since the

⁸ CCC 84-95; see also John Paul II, *Ad Tuendam Fidem*.

⁹ J. Neuner and J. Dupuis (eds), *The Christian Faith* (6th edition), pp 937-951, paragraphs (henceforth indicated ND) 2301-2317. Where cross-references are given, DS henceforth will indicate paragraph references to the 36th edition of H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, Freiberg im Breisgau, 1976.

¹⁰ P. Binski, *Mediaeval Death*, 214.

Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into heaven, already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment ... [enjoy the Beatific Vision].¹¹

The force of the Papal definition makes it indisputable doctrine that the discarnate souls in heaven do enjoy the Beatific Vision: this beatific state between death and resurrection is one in which souls enjoy some kind of experience of relating to God. Since the definition only recognises that purification must take place ‘where necessary’ and does not specify when this would be the case, nor the form that it should take, it is possible to make a technical argument that this document does not *directly* assert a process of *post-mortem* purification: while Benedict XII clearly believed such purification to be necessary, the doctrinal formula as stated is vulnerable to arguments that, by the grace of God, *post-mortem* purification might never, *in fact*, be required. It *does* follow from the definition, however, that any need for purification can only be incurred by exercise of one’s free will, since papal authority asserts that those who die without attaining use of free will enjoy the Beatific Vision immediately.

In 1439, the General Council of Florence, seeking reunion with Eastern Christendom, promulgated its *Decree for the Greeks*.¹² To avoid unnecessary dispute, no mention was made of Purgatory being a place, nor of the aptness of ‘fire’ to describe the means of purification. The phrase ‘satisfied by worthy fruits of penance’ must be understood in the light of the growing practice of private penance at that time.¹³

¹¹ Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus*: ND 2305 = DS 1000.

¹² ND, commentary on page 944.

¹³ A. van der Walle, *From Darkness to the Dawn*, 203.

And, if they [souls] are truly penitent and die in God's love before having satisfied by worthy fruits of penance for their sins of commission and omission, their souls are cleansed after death by purgatorial penalties. In order that they be relieved from such penalties, the acts of intercession of the living faithful benefit them, namely the sacrifices of the Mass, prayers, alms and other works of piety which the faithful are wont to do for the other faithful according to the Church's practice.¹⁴

The souls of those who, after having received baptism, have incurred no stain of sin whatever, and those souls who, after having contracted the stain of sin, have been cleansed, either while in their bodies or after having been divested of them as stated above, are received immediately into heaven, and see clearly God himself, one and three, as he is, though some more perfectly than others, according to the diversity of merits.¹⁵ [The possibility of different degrees of punishment in Hell is then affirmed.]

The language used here repeats almost verbatim a decree of the Second Council of Lyons (1274),¹⁶ with the addition of a doctrine of degrees of bliss according to merit. The teaching on Purgatory echoes very closely a statement of Pope Clement IV, proposed in 1267 to Emperor Michael VIII Paleologus as representing 'the faith of the Holy Roman Church'.¹⁷ Dupuis comments:

As regards the doctrine of purgatory, the Orientals admitted its existence as well as the efficacy of prayers offered for the dead. But, while the Latin Church explained its nature with the help of the juridical concept of satisfaction, the East conceived it in a more mystical manner, as a process of maturation and spiritual growth. With regard to the beatific vision, the Orientals denied its immediate possibility and held that it would begin only after the general resurrection.¹⁸

It is important to recognise that by this time, sacramental reconciliation (with the imposition of an act of penance as 'satisfaction') had evolved from being a once-only 'second plank of salvation', to being a frequent practice of

¹⁴ ND 2308 = DS 1304.

¹⁵ ND 2309 = DS 1305.

¹⁶ ND 26 = DS 855-858.

¹⁷ ND, commentary text on pages 17 and 944.

¹⁸ ND, commentary text on page 944.

the faithful. During the first millennium of Christendom, the Sacrament of Penance was regarded as for use once only after Baptism, and necessary only for the most serious sins. Towards the end of the millennium, and more slowly in some parts of Christendom than others, a gradual shift took place to the practice of more frequent recourse to the sacrament, with penitential exercises of a less public nature being imposed on the sinners.¹⁹ If the undertaking of the penance was a necessary part of obtaining God's forgiveness, though, what if the penitent were to die before completing the exercise? This concern is clearly evident in the language of Clement IV, and the conciliar texts of Lyons II and Florence, where *post-mortem* 'purgatorial penalties' provide the 'satisfaction' which was not rendered before death.

The 25th (final) session of the Council of Trent issued a Decree on Purgatory in 1563. It did not treat of the nature of purgatory and simply restated the established teaching of the Church:

The Catholic Church ... has taught in the holy Councils and most recently in this ecumenical Council that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained there are helped by the acts of intercession of the faithful, and especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.²⁰

Paragraph 1031 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* indicates Florence and Trent as the key formulations of the doctrine on Purgatory, and nothing further has been established since. At Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* offered a strong vision of the perfection which awaits the Church after the Last Judgment, and the imperfect state in which we now live through the 'last

¹⁹ R. McBrien, *Catholicism*, 837-840; P. Haffner, *The Sacramental Mystery*, 119-127.

²⁰ ND 2310 = DS 1820, also commentary on page 945.

days'; the souls in purgatory were accorded their status as members of this imperfect church, and the efficacy of suffrage for them upheld.²¹

In 1967, Pope Paul VI issued an Apostolic Constitution on indulgences,²² setting forth the Church's teaching and revising the norms for obtaining them. This clearly followed the Latin tradition of a just expiation:

It is a divinely revealed truth that sins bring punishments inflicted by God's sanctity and justice. These must be expiated either on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and calamities of this life and above all through death, or else in the life beyond through fire and torments or 'purifying' punishments ... imposed by the just and merciful judgment of God for the purification of souls, the defence of the sanctity of the moral order and the restoration of the glory of God to its full majesty...²³

It is therefore necessary for the full remission and — as it is called — reparation of sins ... that all the personal as well as social values and those of the universal order itself, which have been diminished or destroyed by sin, be fully reintegrated whether through voluntary reparation which will involve punishment or through acceptance of the punishments established ... That punishment or the vestiges of sin may remain to be expiated or cleansed and that they in fact frequently do even after the remission of guilt is clearly demonstrated by the doctrine on purgatory.²⁴ [The Council of Florence text follows.]

This document also made clear the Church's intention that, if possible, no soul should suffer Purgatory. Noting that Canon 468 §2 of the 1917 Code²⁵ required priests to grant an apostolic blessing imparting a plenary indulgence whenever they assisted a dying person with the sacraments, Paul VI granted the same indulgence, in the absence of a priest, to any dying member of the faithful 'provided they are properly disposed and have been

²¹ Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, 48-51.

²² Paul VI, *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, hereafter ID.

²³ ID 2.

²⁴ ID 3.

²⁵ J. Myers, *The 1917 or Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law*, 181.

in the habit of reciting some prayers during their lifetime.²⁶ Such conditions are not onerous, especially if ‘properly disposed’ need not be as exacting as the ‘usual condition’ of total detachment from all sin.

Finally, we have already noted how the *Catechism* summarises the Church’s teaching in Purgatory in two sections: eschatology (1030-1032) and indulgences (1471-1479).

²⁶ ID, norm 18.

Chapter 3: The Constraints of Doctrine

Having identified the applicable definitions, what necessarily follows? Are there logical consequences which clarify what *must*, what *may*, and what *cannot* be said about Purgatory in the light of the foregoing statements? This chapter is an exercise in logic, and will not consider in detail the human experience of undergoing purgation.

The Council of Florence asserted that after death there is an experience of ‘purgatorial penalties’. This circumlocution is a natural way of speaking in a Latin tradition which had long used the adjective *purgatorial*, but, as Le Goff has shown,²⁷ only began to admit the noun *purgatorium* from the late 12th Century. The experiences which souls undergo in this state are therefore penalties, *i.e.* (following *Benedictus Deus*) punishments incurred according to wrongful exercise of one’s free-will; they are also purgatorial — they cleanse the soul in a manner similar to the voluntary undertaking of penitential acts by the living.

Florence, Trent, and mediaeval Eastern belief held that suffrage benefits souls in purgatory. It must therefore be the case that a soul’s *post-mortem* experience is in some meaningful way made *better* when someone exercises suffrage on its behalf. Now it cannot be better for the soul to endure an increased penalty, nor for it to be purified less than totally from its sins. Therefore, the effect of suffrage must be (i) a lessening of penalty, (ii) a greater purification, and/or (iii) some form of blessing incommensurable

²⁷ J. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 362-366.

with penalties or purification. Further, since the Church admits the concept of a plenary indulgence, a total remission of penalty (*i.e.* effect i) is possible.

If the experience of purgatory were not quantifiable in this way, it would be meaningless to speak of the possibility of a ‘benefit’, which of its very nature is an increase of goodness. Therefore it must be possible to quantify the ‘experience’ of purgatory, at least in asserting the existence of greater and lesser purifications and punishments, without prejudice to the possibility of co-existent blessings of type (iii).

Now, the nature of a penalty is that it is a satisfaction demanded objectively by a wrongful act. The nature of a purification is to cleanse the will from attachment to anything less than God, so that the will may always choose the highest good. As an initial model, suppose there were an ‘economy of purification’ whereby the degree of satisfaction (penalty) required depended *exactly* on the extent of the failure of will. In this case, to undergo purification in and of itself would constitute the satisfaction which justice demands, and the purging experience would be quantifiable using only one dimension.

How would the suffrage of the living affect this one-dimensional model where the penalty is proportional to the impurity of the will? If the penalty were lessened, then so would be the degree of purification, with the consequence that the more people prayed for a particular soul, the less it would be purified. But this cannot be a net benefit to the soul, which ends up less pure than if it had been neglected by the living. On the other hand, if suffrage increased the degree of purification, the soul would endure an identical experience to that which it would have incurred had it committed more sins. This, too, surely cannot be a benefit to the soul, and furthermore seems unjust.

Therefore, there must be at least two dimensions to the experience of purgation. The simplest model is where one dimension is punitive (penal), and may be lessened by the application of suffrage; the other dimension depends solely upon the amount of purification needed by the will in order to choose God alone. This, however, separates purification from penalty too radically: we are doctrinally committed to the existence of ‘purgatorial penalties’. There is no need to hypothecate a penalty which is not purgative (other than in Hell); but there may be need to envisage a purgation which is not penal — particularly in the case of those who earned for themselves a plenary indulgence during their earthly lives but died in a state of imperfect attachment to God.

Baptised persons who die having never attained the exercise of reason do not pass through purgation. Clearly such persons never had the opportunity to incur penalties. Does it, however, follow that in their discarnate or resurrected state, their wills are perfectly attuned to God, or is a purification required? What of a rational person baptised on their deathbed? Baptism of itself does not purify the behaviour of those who live any length of time afterwards. If Church teaching requires such a person to go straight to heaven, would they enter heaven with an impure will? There must surely be some transformation of the soul which is purifying, but not penal.

Given the need for ‘purgatorial penalties’, but also the possibility of non-penal purgation, let us adopt the traditional categories of duration (analogous to time on earth) and intensity (analogous to the heat produced by a fire). In Purgatory, we posit, a soul endures a varying (but non-zero) *intensity* of purgation for a finite time. The purification required by a soul is determined solely by the state of detachment of its will at the time of death.

The penalty depends on the sins and good works committed since baptism and the suffrage applied on behalf of the soul.

We further suppose that the duration of purgation is simply related to the penalty. Therefore, if two souls have incurred the same penalty, the one needing the greater purification must undergo a more intense purgation. If suffrage is applied on behalf of a soul, and its duration is shortened, it must undergo a greater intensity for the time remaining. If a plenary indulgence is applied, this must correspond to an instantaneous purgation of unlimited intensity (and this could apply at the moment of death in the case of one who had earned oneself an applicable plenary indulgence during life). The nature of the purgation must be such that a short, intense purgation is 'better' than a prolonged, less intense, purgation, in order for suffrage to truly benefit the souls. Conversely, the 'penal' nature of the penalty could be understood as the delay which drags out the purification instead of applying it as rapidly as possible.

Penances undertaken while still in this earthly life lessen one's purgatory. They are expiatory by virtue of being acts which would not have been undertaken except in recompense for sin. They are purificatory by virtue of being deliberate acts of will, exercises in training the will towards choosing the good. But the essential connection here is precisely the exercise of the will, which is not possible after death, where purification must be passive.

Therefore, a two-dimensional (time *vs.* intensity) model of purgation is the simplest possible model which is consistent with doctrinal definitions about purgatory. This does not rule out more complex models, where different kinds of sin attract punishments of varying kind; but given that the discarnate soul lacks the mechanism of a body, which would be its normal channel for complex interactions, the simplest model might be preferred.

Chapter 4: The Contribution of Scripture and Tradition

In this chapter we shall review the key sources from Scripture and Tradition which arguably provide evidence for Purgatory. The methodology to be employed is that recommended by the Pontifical Biblical Commission: exegesis of Scripture begins with a search for the literal sense intended by the sacred author, which is clarified by comparison with other literature of its time and the various tools of literary criticism, particularly the historical-critical approach.²⁸ The standard of proof sought here²⁹ is to establish the literal meaning of texts without recourse to the presuppositions of any particular Christian denomination, other than the choice of methodology just mentioned. Both a spiritual sense and a ‘fuller’ sense of scripture are also acknowledged by Catholic authority,³⁰ but these must be teased out in partnership with the development of doctrine.³¹

Biblical texts traditionally cited³² as witnesses to Purgatory are II Macc 12:44-46 (on the fittingness of praying for the dead), Mt 12:32 (suggesting that some sins can be forgiven ‘in the world to come’)³³ and the references to purifying fire in I Cor 3:15 and I Pt 1:7. Here I will consider these texts and

²⁸ Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (hereafter IBC), section I *passim* and II.B.1; see also Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum*, hereafter DV, 11-12.

²⁹ This chapter therefore works to a more ecumenical standard than the dissertation as a whole; the author’s intent is to make a case here which will meet the standard required for scholarly pan-denominational Christian exegesis.

³⁰ IBC II.B.2-3.

³¹ IBC III.B acknowledges how the first disciples ‘experienced an ever-deepening and progressive clarification of the revelation they had received’.

³² CCC 1031-1032; Seibel, 41; Schreier, 173-175; R. Ombres, ‘Latins and Greeks in Debate over Purgatory, 1230-1439’, 9.

³³ CCC 1031 quotes Gregory the Great using this as a proof-text.

also offer a fresh exegesis of other texts: the dominical saying ‘Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny!’ found in Mt 5:26 and Lk 12:59, which is expressed in another form in the parable of the two debtors in Mt 18:23-35;³⁴ and also the ignorant servant punished lightly at the Master’s return in Lk 12:48.

Sources worthy of mention which witness to early Tradition concerning prayer for the dead include the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, the *Passion of Perpetua*, and writings of Tertullian, Origen and Augustine; these will also be given brief consideration below.

II Maccabees: A Holy and Pious Thought?

The Old Testament (deutero-canonical) text most often used in treatments of Purgatory is II Macc 12:44-45:

[II Macc 12:44³⁵] Indeed, if he [Judas Maccabeus] did not expect the fallen to be resurrected, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. [45] Moreover, he perceived that a most glorious recompense is laid up for those who pass away in a state of piety — a holy and pious thought! Therefore he had rites of atonement performed for the dead, to absolve them from their sin.

These verses follow an account of Jews slain in battle who were found to be carrying idols looted from Jamnia; v 43 tells how Judas Maccabeus arranged for a sin offering to be made in Jerusalem. The reading of vv 42b-45 is textually difficult,³⁶ and it is possible to read either that Judas *did*, or *did not*,

³⁴ Use of this text for primitive forms of teaching on Purgatory is not unknown: it has been used by Tertullian, during his montanist period, and by Cyprian. See J. Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 223-224, and Müller, 31.

³⁵ J. Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 432 and 450 (hereafter Goldstein II).

³⁶ R. Doran, ‘The Second Book of Maccabees: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections’, 277.

believe in the resurrection, though Goldstein³⁷ is clear that I Macc 2:62-64 communicates that Judas actually did not.

The sin-offering portrayed seems to fulfil Lev 4:14-21, in which case it would be an atonement on behalf of the surviving members of the army, not those fallen. Rabbinic tradition at the time did not allow the possibility of an expiation on behalf of the dead;³⁸ recent research on death rituals in Israel, however, hints at the possibility that a popular custom of praying for the dead may have existed, and further evidence of this type may cause revision of our understanding of this passage.³⁹ The Jewish community at the time of I and II Macc clearly held divergent views about the practice, since it preserved II Macc but also the contrary opinion found in the Babylonian Talmud.⁴⁰

The significant verses have the character of a gloss inserted by Jason, the author of II Macc; Jason was a believer in the resurrection of the dead, unlike the author of I Macc. Many translations identify the ‘holy and pious thought’ as the sentiment that it was right to make an offering for the dead,⁴¹ in which case the natural reading (but not the only possible sense) is that the atonement is efficacious. The literary form of the two verses is that they constitute a personal polemic by Jason, the human author; but insofar as this

³⁷ Goldstein II, 450; J. Goldstein, *I Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 12, makes an argument *ex silentio* for this passage.

³⁸ Goldstein II, 450, cites *Babylonian Talmud Zebahim* 9b (verified in I. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud – Seder Kodashim*, 43); *contra* J. Bartlett, *The First and Second Books of the Maccabees*, 320.

³⁹ Doran, 277, suggests that the rites underlying Is 57 are examples, but does not cite his sources for recent research into Israelite death rituals.

⁴⁰ *Babylonian Talmud Zebahim* 9b (verified in Epstein, *Seder Kodashim*, 43).

⁴¹ *E.g.* Revised Standard Version (RSV), Jerusalem Bible (JB), New Jerusalem Bible (NJB), Christian Community Bible (CCB).

polemic is the literal meaning of an inspired Biblical author, the content holds weight. Can we assert, given the literary form, that Scripture here *reveals* unambiguously that it is efficacious to pray for the dead?

The verses in II Macc are suggestive but, given the literary form, do not constitute a revelation of efficacy beyond reasonable doubt; another possible reading would be that God approved of the good but futile intentions of those who sought to cleanse their kinsmen — which would, however, raise issues of whether a perfect God could approve an imperfect act. Catholic tradition and liturgical usage⁴² accepts these verses as relevant to purgatory, certainly forming part of this text's *sensus plenior* in the light of subsequent development of doctrine, but as a locus of proof it does not stand unambiguously on its internal merits; liberal or evangelical exegetes might also dispute the canonicity of Maccabees.

Further, and more seriously, it is problematic to construct a theology of deliverance from Purgatory predating the saving death of Christ; and the Old Testament must be interpreted in the light of the New.⁴³ Therefore, while II Macc 12:44-45 is a traditional locus for revelation concerning suffrage for the dead, it does not meet the standard set for our current project.

The Gospels: The Significance of Paying the Last Penny

At three points in the Gospel tradition, we find the concept of 'being imprisoned until you have paid the last penny'. Can this be understood as a teaching on Purgatory with a clear implication of expiation?

⁴² *Lectioary III*, 857 includes II Macc 12:43-45 among first readings for Masses for the Dead.

⁴³ DV 15-16.

This saying is placed in the mouth of Jesus as a plain teaching by both Matthew (5:26) and Luke (12:59); Mt 18:23-35 also reprises it as the punchline to the parable of the two debtors. These three witnesses to the saying make it likely that the early believers knew it as a saying of Jesus, part of the Q-source material⁴⁴ if the Griesbach-Weisse two-source hypothesis⁴⁵ is correct; certainly it has been transmitted by two inspired evangelists as authentic Christian teaching and at least in this sense represents the ‘honest truth’⁴⁶ of what Jesus taught.

Mt 5:26 places it in the context of the Sermon on the Mount.

[NRSV Mt 5:25] Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. [26] Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

The preceding verses (21-22) treat of three different kinds of punishment incurred by giving your brother different kinds of insult; vv 23-24 place a high priority on making peace when a brother ‘has something against you’. In vv 25-26 it is implicit that the accuser’s claim against the listener is righteous (since judgment will be passed in favour of the accuser); the consequences of failing to reach agreement are portrayed as imprisonment ‘until you have

⁴⁴ B. Mack, *The Lost Gospel*, 44 and 97, notes that in the paradigm held since 1988, this text is thought to belong to the second of three historical layers in the formation of Q, the Q² stratum concerning sayings about judgment.

⁴⁵ Mack, 19-20.

⁴⁶ DV 19.

paid the last penny'. Imprisonment for debt was not part of Jewish law: the idea is presumably a reflection of Hellenistic practice.⁴⁷

Is the saying meant to carry eschatological significance, or is it merely a counsel of wisdom for maintaining good social relationships in earthly life? Exegetes generally find no reason to doubt that the saying originated from Jesus; Davies and Allison note⁴⁸ how it is typical of His and of Jewish eschatology given the role of the judge. Matthew's Gospel tradition notably uses 'debt' to express generally that which God forgives us in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:12). At the time Q is thought to have been composed, eschatological questions would have been urgent; by the time Matthew wrote, this was less imperative.⁴⁹ That the saying has an eschatological dimension is supported by Mack, by Davies and Allison, and strongly so (because emphasised by *Amen*) by Luz.⁵⁰

Betz⁵¹ considers the saying primarily as a wisdom tradition about avoiding conflict on earth, with Old Testament antecedents⁵² and repeated in the *Didache*;⁵³ the 'last penny' might encompass not only the original debt but lawyers' fees, a court fine, or a bribe to the jailer. He does, however, allow

⁴⁷ W. Davies and D. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Volume I (hereafter D&A I), 520; see also U. Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary* (hereafter Luz II), 472 in the context of Mt 18.

⁴⁸ D&A I, 519.

⁴⁹ D&A I, 519.

⁵⁰ U. Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary* (hereafter Luz I), 281 and 290.

⁵¹ H. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 228-230.

⁵² Prov 25:7-8, Sir 18:20; cf. Prov 6:1-5.

⁵³ *Didache*, 1.5, in Staniforth, *Early Christian Writings*, 191: here the 'last penny' saying is used of the punishment of one who needlessly demands material Christian charity, but in the context of praising those who give alms generously.

a possible eschatological dimension, comparing it with Hellenistic belief in having to make tenfold restitution for injustice before admission to the Elysian Fields.⁵⁴

It is consistent with current scholarship, then, to apply exegesis to the saying as eschatological. Verses 22, 29 and 30 issue warnings about being consigned to *Gehenna*. Does this indicate a context of eternal punishment, or is it consistent with a temporary imprisonment? In 1st/2nd Century CE rabbinic writings,⁵⁵ *Sheol* is carried over from earlier times as the first destination of the dead, but becomes transitional either to Eden (where souls are welcomed by Abraham⁵⁶) or to *Gehenna*. A last judgment is proposed: after it Rabbi Akiba and the Hillel school think sinners spend 12 months⁵⁷ in *Gehenna* and are then annihilated. The Shammai school holds that there is eternal bliss in Eden, eternal *Gehenna*, and also a temporary visit to *Gehenna* for souls judged to be of intermediate status. So it is not impossible for *Gehenna* to indicate a transient state,⁵⁸ though only the Shammai position allows a release into life at the end of it.

Matthew most probably associated paying the last penny with the *Gehenna* of 5:22.⁵⁹ Davies and Allison⁶⁰ hold that Matthew believed *Gehenna*

⁵⁴ Betz, 229, cites Plato on the myth of Er, *Republic*, Book X, 615b-c (verified in G. Grube, 286).

⁵⁵ J. Neusner, *The Tosefta*, Vol. II, 1188-1189: *Sanhedrin* 13.3 and 13.4; Le Goff, 39-41; see also D&A I, 515.

⁵⁶ Note that by the time Luke's Gospel was written (and probably in the speech of the time of Jesus Himself, given the prominence of Abraham in the parable), Lazarus could be described as in 'the Bosom of Abraham' (Lk 16:22) as his *post-mortem* reward.

⁵⁷ Rabbi Johnnanan ben Nur held it was only the time from Passover to Pentecost: D&A I, 515.

⁵⁸ So Ratzinger, 221.

⁵⁹ D&A I, 521.

⁶⁰ D&A I, 515.

was eternal, since in other verses he speaks of ‘eternal fire’; this is, however, no proof of the eternity of *Gehenna* if Matthew followed the Shammai school and therefore felt it necessary to mention eternity explicitly when relevant.

Augustine (†430⁶¹), commenting on this passage, ponders whether ‘paying the last penny’ truly means ‘paying the fullness of the debt’: he explicitly presumes this happens in the place of eternal punishment, but refuses to commit too strongly to what Scripture means by eternal punishment. He grapples inconclusively with whether ‘until’ implies a termination or not.⁶²

Later in the Gospel, Matthew 18:34 reprises the concept of being imprisoned to fulfil a debt in the parable of the two debtors, a clear teaching on the relationships between God and two human persons. The parable follows Peter’s question (18:21) about how often he should forgive a brother who sins against him — the implication being that this concerns a fellow-member of the Church, one who is already part of God’s Kingdom. The message of 18:35 is plain: unless you forgive your brother’s debts (wrongdoings), God will consign you for torture⁶³ as deserved by your own debts.

⁶¹ J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, Vol. 1, 381.

⁶² Augustine, *Commentary on the Lord’s Sermon on the Mount*, Bk I Ch 11 Section 30. (D. Kavanagh 47-48.)

⁶³ The Greek word βασανιστής (‘torturers’) at 18:34 is a *hapax legomenon* for the New Testament (D&A II, 802); it is striking that the Evangelist follows it with a statement that God will treat people in the same way, though the sense of the text does not require us to assert that God Himself inflicts torture, which would raise doctrinal issues in the light of CCC 1472.

Most exegetes agree this pericope to be a parable of the Lord, though retold in Matthew's style;⁶⁴ some argue it originates with the Evangelist.⁶⁵ Luz asserts that such parables would be heard and read as clearly having allegorical features.⁶⁶ De Boer⁶⁷ attempts to reconstruct the parable as it was before Matthew edited it, and posits that the primitive form consists simply of the minor debtor, and then the unforgiving major debtor, being imprisoned until they pay all their debts. Verse 35, the warning that God will do the same to the unmerciful, may have been a redactional construction by Matthew.⁶⁸ The evangelist may have intended to evoke popular apocalyptic imagery by speaking of torture;⁶⁹ the historical context is that a debtor would be tortured to motivate his family and friends to pay the debt as quickly as possible.⁷⁰

Clearly this parable has the root meaning that one should exercise the mercy one wishes to receive oneself:⁷¹ while the Mt 5:25 passage suggests that the guilty party must take the initiative, the onus here seems to be on the righteous accuser (who is himself indebted to God) to cancel debts.

Verse 35, even if by Matthew rather than original to Jesus, presents it also as an eschatological allegory. Does the parable imply a time-limited

⁶⁴ W. Davies and D. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. Volume II (hereafter D&A II), 794.

⁶⁵ Luz II, 469.

⁶⁶ Luz II, 471.

⁶⁷ M. De Boer, 'Ten Thousand Talents? Matthew's Interpretation and Redaction of the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt 18:23-35)', 230.

⁶⁸ D&A II, 803.

⁶⁹ Luz II, 474.

⁷⁰ D&A II, 802.

⁷¹ A biblical theme spanning Sir 28:2, Matthew's own *Lord's Prayer* at Mt 6:12, and James 2:13.

punishment for the major debtor? Ten thousand *talents* is large enough to symbolise an infinite debt, so eternal punishment may be implied;⁷² de Boer's reconstruction⁷³ holds that the major debtor originally owed 10,000 denarii, not talents — a sum which could feasibly be discharged in due time.⁷⁴ But the canonical text uses 'talents', and in Patristic discussion, Chrysostom and Apollinaris held that in effect 'until' meant 'eternal punishment'.⁷⁵ Little other Patristic commentary survives; mediaeval theologians also interpreted the text as concerning losing one's salvation, and debated whether God could revoke forgiveness already bestowed.⁷⁶

Luke 12:58-59 employs the same characters, a judge and an 'officer'.⁷⁷ It is noteworthy that the chapter begins (12:5) with a strong charge to fear the one who has authority both to kill the body, and cast the soul into *Gehenna*. Those with most need to fear punishment, it seems, are hypocritical Pharisees (12:1) and those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit (12:10). Ignorant wrongdoing will be punished (12:48), but those who know God's commandments and break them will receive more severe punishment and be destroyed (12:46-47). There is no context of any particular kind of sin for the saying on making up with your accuser; the preceding verse (12:57) rather

⁷² D&A II, 803.

⁷³ de Boer, 230.

⁷⁴ For further arguments about whether the original form was 10,000 denarii, but Matthew changed it to talents, see D&A II, 795; Luz II, 471.

⁷⁵ M. Simonetti, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Matthew 14-28*, 87: Apollinaris, *Fragment 92*; John Chrysostom, *Homily LXI on Mt 18*, para 4; Chrysostom text verified in P. Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 1, Volume X, 379.

⁷⁶ Luz II, 476-77.

⁷⁷ The choice of a different Greek word here seems irrelevant.

emphasises one's responsibility for recognising right behaviour without recourse to a judge.

Recent major commentaries do not devote much attention to this pericope in Luke, and the chief scholarly question is whether Luke intends the saying to be understood primarily as practical wisdom, or as an eschatological parable. If the latter, then is the 'adversary' with whom one must make peace God or Satan?⁷⁸

Fitzmyer⁷⁹ believes the sayings to be minatory, not parabolic; since Luke has inserted them here in a travelogue in Stage III of the Gospel tradition, the original context⁸⁰ is lost. Marshall notes various possibilities without committing himself, though he holds the Matthean parallel to be unambiguously eschatological. Jeremias, however, holds Matthew's teaching to be pragmatic and Luke to offer the teaching in an eschatological context; he allows that the delay of the Parousia caused the church to give more weight to such sayings as hortatory norms for Christian living pending the final judgment, rather than treating them as a call to immediate 'once and for all' action.⁸¹

Origen's (†ca. 254⁸²) *Homily 35*⁸³ treats of this pericope. In paragraphs 10-15⁸⁴ we see hints of Origen's understanding of judgment, where each sin

⁷⁸ German references to all these possible interpretations are given by I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 552.

⁷⁹ J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, 1001-1003; this assertion presupposes that Luke was not concerned with placing Q-sayings in their correct historical context despite his statement of intent at Lk 1:1-4.

⁸⁰ That is, Stage I: the oral preaching of Jesus.

⁸¹ J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 43-44; L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 209, also holds Matthew to be pragmatic with Luke eschatological.

⁸² Pelikan, Vol. 1, 390.

accrues its own due penalty; the faithful man, however, is *enriched* daily. The Lord can forgive debts, but if we do not gain his forgiveness, we are in the power of the debt collector.

Even among meagre and fine sins there is a difference ... I cannot clearly state how long a time we are shut up in prison, until we pay the debt. For if he who owes a little debt does not come out until he pays the last penny, then surely for him who owed such a great debt infinite ages will be counted off for paying what he owes.⁸⁵

We find, then, that there is no obstacle to reading all three references to the 'last penny' as having an eschatological dimension, explicitly so by Mt 18:35 and implicitly by their proximity to references to *Gehenna* in Mt 5 and Lk 12. Nor does the concept of *Gehenna* intrinsically exclude the possibility of punishment of finite duration. The saying is original to Jesus Himself, and therefore constitutes a privileged form of revelation: critiques of its authority depend less on questions of what it means for New Testament authors to be 'inspired' and more on the Christological issue of the divine knowledge possessed by Jesus.⁸⁶ Spoken by the lips of the Word Incarnate, preserved by the community which knew the Risen Jesus, set down as inspired Scripture, with the authority of a Gospel: insofar as any Scripture can adequately speak of what lies beyond death, this text must be as authoritative as any in the Bible.

There is no evidence that the earliest Christian community received this text as teaching about a finite state of *post-mortem* punishment. There again,

⁸³ J. Lienhard, *Origen: Homilies on Luke, Fragments on Luke*, 142-152.

⁸⁴ Lienhard, 147-152.

⁸⁵ Lienhard, 151-152.

⁸⁶ For which see the International Theological Commission's 1985 document *La coscienza che Gesù aveva di se stesso e della sua missione*.

the early Christians were disappointed in their eschatological expectations, having wrongly understood that the Parousia would come in their lifetime.⁸⁷ A true exegesis of Scripture must allow for the Spirit to guide disciples into ‘an ever-deepening and progressive clarification of the revelation’⁸⁸ already given. Hence, knowing *only* that the subsequent development of doctrine acknowledges the possibility of a *post-mortem* state of punishment and/or purification, and trusting in the authenticity of the Gospels, how may we interpret these verses?

The literal interpretation of the verses, given the historical practices which Jesus *chose* to use as an illustration, is that there is a finite eschatological state of punishment or torture, from which one is released when one’s debt is discharged. The debt is towards one’s accuser, which is most naturally interpreted as symbolising God (or Christ) as eschatological judge. It might be possible to develop a theology of Satan as accuser (his role in Job) and draw parallels with theories of the atonement in which Christ’s redeeming act is payment to Satan rather than God;⁸⁹ this question is worthy of further exploration, but would take us beyond our current project of exploring the dynamics of purgatory.

One can avoid purgatorial torture entirely by entering into a pact of forgiveness with one’s accuser. A person is consigned to purgation because

⁸⁷ See *e.g.* I Thess 4:12-16, Jn 21:23.

⁸⁸ IBC III.B.

⁸⁹ See *e.g.* G. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, for a classic treatment of theories of the atonement, especially 47-55 for a treatment of the idea of paying ransom to Satan.

he⁹⁰ has unpaid debts *and* has not successfully appealed for forgiveness. The Mt 18 parable indicates that the appeal for mercy is granted only to those who have themselves acted mercifully, a concept echoed strongly in the Lord's Prayer: 'forgive us our debts as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us' (Mt 6:12). The sayings in Matthew and Luke can be interpreted on two levels: seek peace with your eschatological accuser; or (given the wider Gospel message embodied in the Lord's Prayer) seek peace with your brother in order to be at peace with God.

It seems to follow that Purgatory is therefore experienced (i) by those who did not ask God for forgiveness for all of their debts (the simplest sense of Mt 5 and Lk 12), and (ii) by those who did ask God's total forgiveness but were judged to have been unmerciful to some degree (Mt 18, and the Lord's Prayer). In such cases it is possible for souls to attain heaven even though they did not fully practise penitence or mercy during their earthly lives: lack of expiation (earthly penances) and of spiritual maturity (unmercifulness) can both be remedied beyond the grave.

The Gospel texts do not explicitly indicate that the prisoner's debt might in practice be discharged by his family and friends, but this would have been the reality in the ancient world, and a pragmatic course of action by any accuser more interested in recouping debts than in punitive damages. One assumes that the accused does not possess the means to pay the debts himself, or else he would have avoided prison using his own resources. Given that Jesus Himself chose the analogy of a debtor's prison, it is not

⁹⁰ The use of non-inclusive language is acknowledged, used here for stylistic reasons. Those who object to such things are entreated to exercise mercy, and to note that the author did not choose to consign a woman to purgatory!

implausible that He meant to indicate the possibility of debts being discharged vicariously. From this the concept of indulgences may be argued to have a justification in Scripture.

The Gospels: An Ignorant Servant, Punished Lightly?

In close proximity to Luke's version of the 'last penny' teaching, we find another eschatological text: the account of two servants being punished. Lk 12:35-48 is a block of teaching about the eschatological return of the Master, and mostly concerns a servant who knows the Master's will, but is caught out on the Master's return for not obeying it:

[JB Lk 12:46b-48a]: The master will cut him off⁹¹ and send him to the same fate as the unfaithful. [47] The servant who knows what the Master wants, but has not even started to carry out those wishes, will receive very many strokes of the lash. [48] The one who did not know, but deserves to be beaten for what he has done, will receive fewer strokes.

The Jerusalem Bible's use of 'cut off' is misleading, since the literal meaning of the text is 'cut in two';⁹² it would not be sound to assert that the ignorant servant, who is not said to be 'cut off', therefore enters the Kingdom of Heaven. Nevertheless, this latter servant explicitly receives 'fewer strokes of

⁹¹ The NRSV's preferred reading here is 'cut him in pieces', but allows 'cut him off' as an alternative translation. RSV has 'will punish him' with an alternative of 'cut him in pieces'. NJB and CCB follow JB without noting any textual difficulties.

⁹² Fitzmyer, 990; Johnson, 205.

the lash'.⁹³ This might be read as a revelation that, *at the return of the Master*, some will receive punishment yet not be destroyed.⁹⁴

If the text does apply to servants who are ultimately saved, it is problematic when applied to Purgatory, since the return of the Master suggests a revelation about the Second Coming,⁹⁵ at which Purgatory will be abolished. Yet this raises the question of what fate awaits those alive at the Second Coming who would have been candidates for Purgatory had they died at an earlier time: damnation, salvation even though they are 'impure', or some form of purification other than Purgatory? We will return to this question in our consideration of I Cor 3.

The Gospels: Neither in this World nor the World to Come?

Mt 12:32 threatens 'no forgiveness in this world or the world to come'. Does this text imply that some things may be forgiven in the world to come? The primary teaching point of the text concerns the finality of rejecting the Holy Spirit, not any distinction between opportunities for forgiveness.⁹⁶ Augustine⁹⁷ offers a lengthy consideration of the nature of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, but dismisses any distinction of opportunities for

⁹³ This may be behind Gregory the Great's thinking (*Dialogues*, 4.42, trans. O. J. Zimmerman) in recounting the story of a deacon for whom there was 'purification from sin after death because the deacon had sinned through ignorance, and not through malice'.

⁹⁴ Luke might be making a similar distinction in 19:24 and 19:27 where a servant fearful of investing his talent merely loses his deposit (*cf.* the parallel in Mt 25:30 where he is expelled into darkness and the gnashing of teeth) but those who oppose the reign of the King are to be slaughtered.

⁹⁵ Fitzmyer, 984-987, asserts that the contextual pericope (Lk 12:35-46) has eschatological significance, though concerning the idle servant 'cut in two', admits: 'it is difficult to say how much allegory is involved in this saying'.

⁹⁶ van der Walle, 201.

⁹⁷ Augustine, *Sermon XXI*, para 20.

punishment, reasoning that ‘repentance only obtaineth forgiveness in this world, that it may have its effect in the world to come’. Luz is puzzled by the phrase and presumes Matthew preserves a saying he has received, which strengthens the seriousness of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸ Davies and Allison⁹⁹ consider the wider pericope to be of dominical origin, while admitting they are in a minority.

The Markan parallel, 3:28-29, brands this blasphemy as ‘an eternal sin’. This is a distinctly different turn of phrase, and if Mark is prior then Matthew has expanded the notion of ‘eternal sin’ by using a different figure of speech, possibly one employing Semitic parallelism for emphasis. Even if we accept the above hypothesis that Jesus spoke of ‘paying the last penny’ as a deliberate revelation of a finite *post-mortem* punishment, we would not expect Matthew to reflect such an idea purposefully (contrary to the Christian culture of his time) in his writing style. On the other hand, if Matthew were prior to Mark then it would be significant that Mark’s redaction avoided any suggestion of forgiveness in the coming world. In either case, this Matthean text cannot stand alone as an unambiguous revelation of Purgatory, even though it has been used as evidence of such a state¹⁰⁰ by authorities no less than Gregory the Great!¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Luz II, 209.

⁹⁹ D&A II, 344-345.

¹⁰⁰ This text reveals nothing, of course, of the dynamics of Purgatory beyond the possibility of sins being forgiven there.

¹⁰¹ CCC 1031.

Peter and Paul: Saved, but as by Fire?

Historically, the one text most used as the basis of teaching on Purgatory has been I Cor 3:13-15.¹⁰² Here, Paul asserts that if a man builds on the foundation of Christ, his work will be tried by fire. If it is proved by the test, he will be rewarded; if his work is burned up, he will suffer a ‘loss’ yet be saved, but as by fire. A perspective sympathetic to the traditional Catholic interpretation is offered by Collins:

The image of construction workers dominates Paul’s exhortation. Those whose works withstand the testing by fire will receive a reward, literally their ‘wages’; those whose works are destroyed by fire will be penalised. Paul does not say that these workers will be destroyed... they will, nonetheless, be saved. Paul does not tell his readers the grounds for this amazing affirmation. Despite the fact that he has used the apocalyptic imagery of a destructive fire ... the apostle remains convinced that those who belong to God’s holy people will be saved.¹⁰³

Exegetes differ widely about whether the day of testing is the eschatological Day of Judgment,¹⁰⁴ and about whether the ‘loss’ which is suffered is understood as witnessing one’s work being burnt up, or (reflecting a secular usage of the word ζεμιουσθαί) a fine exacted from builders for shoddy workmanship.¹⁰⁵

Should this pericope be interpreted as a revelation about an

¹⁰² Binski, 183-184.

¹⁰³ R. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 152.

¹⁰⁴ Collins, 158, favours an eschatological interpretation, as does C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 88, and G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 141-142; W. Orr and J. A. Walther, *I Corinthians*, 173 also espouse this, but cautiously; H. Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, 76, prefers to see a metaphor which is not a preview of the eschaton.

¹⁰⁵ So Collins, 160; Conzelmann 76, allows either interpretation; Orr and Walther, 168, prefer ‘sustain a loss’; Barrett, 89, finds the translation difficult, but recoils from any element of punishment. Fee, 143, finds that all other New Testament occurrences of the word indicate loss rather than punishment, and takes this to be the case here also.

eschatological state of fiery testing? Conzelmann¹⁰⁶ is unwilling to admit interpretations indicating Purgatory, and is uncomfortable with the possible implication that baptism makes a person irreversibly saved, though pleased with the idea that poor works of themselves do not affect one's status as a Christian. He is forced to conclude that the meaning of v 15 is obscure – perhaps an indication of his *a priori* denominational position. Barrett's position is similar, as is Fee's;¹⁰⁷ the latter explicitly develops a theology of undeserved reward for good works being added to undeserved salvation as part of God's gift.

Orr and Walther¹⁰⁸ attempt to build a thesis which links the test by fire to the wider context of the passage in which Paul is speaking of his own apostolic mission; therefore the 'test by fire' applies to the quality of the Church which Paul has built. They allow an eschatological interpretation, but restrict it to the testing of church-builders. The verses preceding the passage certainly constitute a meditation by Paul on the role of various apostles but the following verses are exhortations to the whole Corinthian church. While the test certainly will apply to church-builders if it applies to anyone, Orr and Walther fail to consider its wider applicability to Christians; they find the text grammatically difficult and apply caution in interpretation.

Collins, as we have seen, is more willing to read the passage at face value. If we do so, we might see echoes of a saying which could have reached Paul from the nascent Gospel tradition of the time: to those who have much (worthy works), more shall be given (wages); to those who have not (because

¹⁰⁶ Conzelmann, 77.

¹⁰⁷ Barrett, 88-89; Fee, 141-145.

¹⁰⁸ Orr and Walther, 172-174.

their work is burned up) even what they have shall be taken away (further punishment).¹⁰⁹ In any case, Paul's conviction that those who suffer through the test are nevertheless saved is crystal clear.

I Cor 3:13-15 clearly teaches the eschatological testing of work. All the builders start on the foundation of Christ — therefore this teaching applies only to those who have embraced Christian faith. It is implicit that all followers of Christ are expected to produce work of a certain standard.¹¹⁰ Worthy work receives its wages;¹¹¹ if it is lacking, it is burnt up. But what is the relationship of the consumption of poor work to the experience suffered by the worker? In particular, does the final reference to fire, through which a man is saved in v 15, refer to the same fire spoken of in the preceding verses? Is it one and the same act which consumes the work and rescues the person? Many exegetes argue that the phrasing 'as if through fire' is a simple metaphor for being rescued from a dangerous situation.¹¹² Protestant exegetes tend to reject the trivial interpretation that the 'loss' is simply the burning of work, while refusing to allow any sense of 'punishment'.

The text alone does not unambiguously teach an actual eschatological experience of the soul 'passing through fire'. There is a long Catholic tradition of it being used that way, yet the meaning is sufficiently hard to

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Mt 13:12, 25:29; Mk 4:25; Lk 8:18, 12:48 (note: the saying is here quoted in the context of the knowledgeable and ignorant servants), and 19:26 (this passage of Luke featured in the earlier footnote about the servant who loses his deposit).

¹¹⁰ Cf. the parables of servants entrusted with talents to invest until the Master's return: Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:11-27.

¹¹¹ This is not to imply that salvation might be earned; the agreed wage is due to the generosity of the Divine Employer, according to Christ's teaching in Mt 20:1-16.

¹¹² Collins, 160; Fee, 144; Barrett, 189; Conzelmann, 76-77; Orr and Walther, 174, however, find pain in the witnessing of work being burnt.

read that exegetes whose presuppositions deny a purgatory can find legitimate reasons not to be forced to change their position. If we do allow the traditional Catholic interpretation, what does it teach us about the fiery test?

An immediate problem is whether the passage speaks of a test which is to take place on the Day of Judgment, *i.e.* the Final Judgment, rather than at the moment of a person's death. But Paul might be excused a lack of clarity here, given the expectation in his early letter-writing period (*e.g.* I Thess 4:14-16) that Christ would return during the lifetime of most of his audience. Gregory the Great (†604)¹¹³ held that the purifying fire was 'before the Final Judgment' without explicit mention of the particular judgment; article 1031 of the *Catechism* calls Gregory's teaching, affirming the metaphor of fire, part of the 'tradition of the Church'.¹¹⁴

What of those still alive or in purgatory when Jesus returns? The 'day' Paul speaks of in I Cor would have been expected to take place in the lifetime of many listeners, so the fiery experience would be understood to follow the Lord's return. Even if the same experience is available to souls at the moment of death in connection with their particular judgment, as later doctrinal development posits, the root Scripture insists that this ordeal is at the judgment which follows the Parousia.¹¹⁵ The simplest literal reading is that

¹¹³ Zimmerman, page *v*.

¹¹⁴ This raises an interesting point about dogmatic authority: if Gregory's statement is recognised as formal tradition, then the appropriateness of the metaphor of fire is formally defined centuries before the Council of Florence tactfully avoided making an issue of it in the *Decree for the Greeks*, (*cf.* Ombres, 6).

¹¹⁵ Karl Rahner has argued that in the soul's experience, the particular and general judgments are telescoped together, which is another way of avoiding the distinction in practice: Müller, 33.

the two fires are the same, that the soul is saved by the same fire which purifies the person's past works; but this is not essential. For Gregory, the cleansing fire of the world to come is of interchangeable merit with earthly sufferings.¹¹⁶

I Pt 1:7 is also a traditional locus¹¹⁷ for the concept of cleansing fire in purgatory; the passage affirms that when Jesus is revealed, 'your faith will have been tested and proved like gold ... which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire'. Here the context is ambiguous and may refer to trials suffered before death: this text cannot establish the nature of purgation on its own, though its meaning becomes clear in the light of I Cor 3:13-15.¹¹⁸

Tradition: Suffrage for the Dead.

Since Scripture and Tradition flow from the 'same divine wellspring'¹¹⁹ we must also consider evidence of practices concerning the dead which date back to apostolic times. There is significant evidence for the practice of praying for the dead.¹²⁰

In the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (late 2nd Century) the girl Thecla prays for the dead, and Tertullian (†ca. 220¹²¹) knows of this text.¹²² Elsewhere¹²³ he

¹¹⁶ Gregory, *Dialogue* 4, 41, in Zimmerman, 248.

¹¹⁷ CCC 1031.

¹¹⁸ A more thorough study might also consider the relevance of everyone being 'salted with fire' in Mk 9:49; for a cultural context for that passage, see J. D. M. Derrett, 'Salted With Fire'.

¹¹⁹ DV 9.

¹²⁰ See, for instance, R. R. Atwell, 'From Augustine to Gregory the Great: an evaluation of the emergence of the Doctrine or Purgatory', 174-175.

¹²¹ Pelikan, Vol. 1, 393.

¹²² Tertullian, *De baptismo*, 17.

¹²³ Tertullian, *De corona militis*, 3.

acknowledges the practice of making ‘offerings’ for the dead and that this is upheld by Tradition, there being little in Scripture, and yet again, he urges Christian widows to pray for their late husbands to be granted *refrigerium interim*.¹²⁴ According to Tertullian’s thinking, based on the idea of Abaraham’s Bosom, the good dead enter this interim place of refreshment pending the last judgment (in response to Marcion who taught immediate heaven at death).¹²⁵

The authenticity of the memoirs of Perpetua, martyred AD 203, is not in doubt. They recount a sudden urge that she should pray for her brother, who died in childhood; she receives a vision of him, disfigured, in a place where he could not reach water. After days of prayer, she was granted a vision of him in the same place, his face healed, and water now within his reach.¹²⁶

Around the year 421 Augustine wrote a letter on *The Care to Be Taken for the Dead*¹²⁷ in reply to Bishop Paulinus of Nola; both Augustine and Paulinus attest the ‘practice of the universal Church to pray for the dead’,¹²⁸ and Augustine did approve of remembering his dead mother at Mass.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Tertullian, *De monogamia* 10.4. The patristic references in this paragraph are from Le Goff, 47-51.

¹²⁵ Le Goff, 46-48; Binski, 24-25 and 182.

¹²⁶ Le Goff, 48-50; Binski, 184. Account is in Chapter II of Tertullian (attrib.), *The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas*.

¹²⁷ Augustine, ‘On the care to be taken for the dead’, 347-384 in R. Deferrari, *Saint Augustine: Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects*.

¹²⁸ Augustine, ‘On the care to be taken for the dead’: Paulinus in para 1; cf. Augustine in para 3.

¹²⁹ Augustine, *Confessions*, IX, xi, 27 and 35-37; see also references in Atwell, 176, and G. R. Edwards, ‘Purgatory: “Birth” or Evolution?’, 645.

Gradually grew the practice of arranging Masses for the dead.¹³⁰ Chrysostom attests both the practice of offering Mass for the dead and the doctrine of it being an ‘ordinance of the Spirit’ efficacious for their relief:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.¹³¹

It is worthy of note that Gregory the Great treats of Purgatory.¹³² He sees significance in Paul's choice of perishable materials (wood, grass, straw) which are to be burnt up, inferring that they represent trivial sins capable of being pardoned in the next life; he extends the Biblical imagery to speak of foundations of iron, bronze or lead, which would represent mortal sin.

It is not possible to state with certainty that the practice of praying for the dead was sanctioned by the apostles.¹³³ It may readily be argued that the desire to ‘do something’ on behalf of the dead flows from human grief, and any ancient practice is rooted in this rather than revelation. Nevertheless, the practice is attested favourably by major writers of Christian antiquity.

¹³⁰ Binski, 26-27 and 184; Pelikan, Vol. 3, 32-33; cf. Augustine, ‘On the care to be taken for the dead’, para 3.

¹³¹ John Chrysostom, *Homily XLI* (on I Corinthians), para 8, in P. Schaff & T. Chambers, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series I, Vol XII, 253-254; the text here is the translation offered by CCC 1032, and refers to Job 1:5.

¹³² Gregory, *Dialogue* 4, 41 in Zimmerman, 247ff.

¹³³ Le Goff's masterly and exhaustive survey of sources concerning Purgatory offers nothing prior to *The Passion of Perpetua* in its treatment of ancient texts: Le Goff 17-51, especially 48-51. Ratzinger, 218-228, finds hints of Purgatory in Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, and Gregory Nazianzen, but nothing earlier.

Chapter 5: Purgatory: A Description and a Critique

In the previous chapters we have considered what is doctrinally defined about Purgatory, the logical consequences of these definitions, and what can be firmly established as revealed in Scripture and Tradition. In this chapter we shall first create a synthesis which describes Purgatory, and then make a critique in the light of contemporary theology.

Detention and Refinement: A New Paradigm

In the light of what we have established as revealed or doctrinally required, we assert:

- a) **There is a *post-mortem* state in which souls *expiate* their debts.**
(From the ‘last penny’ texts, and clearly in Paul VI’s teaching.)
- b) **Truly penitent souls undergo ‘purgatorial penalties’ in lieu of the penances they were unable to complete while alive.** (Florence)
- c) **Living persons may contribute suffrage towards this expiation by applying Mass, prayers or alms.** (Implicit by the Gospel metaphor of a debtor’s prison; taught by Council of Florence.)
- d) **In order to avoid this state, one must ask the Lord’s mercy before one comes to judgment.** (Mt 5:25-26 and Lk 12:58-59)
- e) **But one will only receive mercy to the extent one has been merciful to others.** (Mt 18; the Lord’s Prayer¹³⁴). If the Mt 5:25-26 and Lk 12:58-59 texts indicate the need to seek God’s mercy in order to avoid Purgatory, then the general teaching of the New Testament on who

¹³⁴ Other New Testament texts support this teaching on the mercifulness of God in general: Mt 5:7 (among the beatitudes); James 2:13 speaks of mercy in the context of judgment.

will be granted mercy surely applies in this case unless cogent reasons to the contrary exist: it follows that souls detained in Purgatory have been unmerciful or else unwilling to ask for total forgiveness.

- f) **The Church grants a plenary indulgence to all its members¹³⁵ who die ‘properly disposed’ and in the habit of ‘reciting some prayers’.** (Paul VI)
- g) **Those baptised who have no need of purification behold the Beatific Vision immediately upon death.** (Benedict XII)
- h) **If faults have been committed through a baptised person’s free will, that soul must be purified either by earthly penance or else *post-mortem* before it can enjoy the beatific vision.** (Benedict XII)
- i) **There is a fire through which one is saved, an experience available at the Final Judgment and, traditionally, also after the Particular Judgment.** (I Cor 3; I Pt; Gregory the Great)
- j) **This salvific fire *may* be coterminous with the experience of seeing one’s poor works ‘burnt up’.** (I Cor 3; I Pt; Gregory the Great)
- k) **There may also be an experience, at the return of the Master, whereby those who sinned in ignorance receive ‘few strokes of the lash’.** (Lk 12:47)

In Chapter 3 we found that it is a logical consequence of doctrine that Purgatory, which justly provides both purification (detachment of the will; maturation) and punishment (expiation; with remission for suffrage), must

¹³⁵ Given that all baptised non-Catholic Christians are members of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, albeit in imperfect communion (CCC 836-838), are they included in the scope of this plenary indulgence?

be at least ‘two dimensional’; souls which have already expiated all sin may nevertheless require a non-penal experience of purification. In fact, we see that in the list above, the expiatory and purificatory aspects of Purgatory can be listed quite separately; the overlap comes where Florence defines that the penalties suffered in lieu of earthly penance are purificatory.

Given the separation which can be made, I propose to coin two new terms: the state of expiation I shall term ***Detention***; the non-penal purification is then not a state but a process of transition, which I shall henceforth call ***Refinement***. This process may be undergone by those baptised on their deathbed, beneficiaries of plenary indulgences, and (out of necessity rather than merit) those remaining on Earth or in Detention when Christ does come again. Then items (a)-(f) in the list above concern Detention, while (g), (i), (j) and (k) concern Refinement. Only item (h) concerns the purification which may take place through Detention and/or Refinement. The Scriptural image of fire applies strictly to Refinement; its appropriateness for Detention is traditional but undefined.

Temporal Punishment

Is ‘temporal punishment’ that which needs to be expiated in Detention, or a failure of will to be corrected by Refinement? It is through the use of this term that the most ambiguity enters the tradition. While Paul VI speaks almost exclusively of the vestiges of sin which need to be expiated, with just a hint of its relevance to ‘personal reintegration,’¹³⁶ the *Catechism*¹³⁷ seems to

¹³⁶ ID 3.

¹³⁷ CCC 1472.

identify temporal punishment explicitly with the need for personal detachment from sin. Where the tradition insists on using the latter sense, it blurs the distinction between penal and non-penal purification, which logic dictates must both exist. A possible loophole is the way in which the *Catechism* states that freedom from temporal punishment is entailed when a soul is purified; it remains possible to understand the temporal punishment as being the expiation which is necessarily rendered, if not already paid by other means, when the corresponding sin is purified.

The word-limit of this dissertation precludes a detailed consideration of the subjective experience of undergoing Detention or Refinement, or a comparison between my distinction and the way in which mystics or theologians have treated of Purgatory. For Catherine of Genoa, Purgatory is a place where souls experience great joy, the more so as the presence of God's love consumes the rust of their sin.¹³⁸ For Karl Rahner, Purgatory is the very awareness of the effects of one's sins on the cosmos;¹³⁹ for Cardinal Ratzinger, it may be a Refinement at the Final Judgment.¹⁴⁰ I would suggest that exposure to those merits of Christ and the saints appropriated by earning a plenary indulgence on one's own behalf, or becoming a passive victim of love when a living soul applies suffrage on one's behalf, may intensify the process of purification with a commensurate lessening of Detention; but speculative development in this direction would take us beyond our project of clarifying what may, what must and what cannot be said of Purgatory.

¹³⁸ Catherine of Genoa, *Purgation and Purgatory*, 71-72.

¹³⁹ N. T. Wright, *For All the Saints?*, 10.

¹⁴⁰ Wright, 10-11; Ratzinger, 228-233.

CONSIDERATIONS WITHIN THE NEW PARADIGM

Many questions and observations would follow if this new paradigm were to be adopted. Here I sketch out a number of them, any of which could be a springboard for further research.

(1) Consent and Purification

Keith Ward¹⁴¹ considers a two-stage life after death. In stage one, souls see their earthly acts and attitudes judged and make ‘progress in understanding and purification’; they can still exercise free will and may yet be subject to the ‘second death’. Only in stage two do souls enter a network of social relationships and endless contemplation of God.

Leslie Stevenson¹⁴² considers and critiques this model: the presence of free-will in the first stage makes this state distinct from the traditional Catholic Purgatory. Could God morally purify people without their free consent? Does there need to be a ‘Last Judgment’ — why should God not allow another chance for those who fail at this stage? If there is judgment, why one extra chance, rather than the Protestant position that ‘God judges at the end of this earthly life, however unfair that seems’?

Since Detention and Refinement only apply to those who are justified by explicit or implicit commitment to God, I suggest that the moral problem Stevenson identifies is circumscribed: consent is granted by virtue of one’s commitment to relationship with God. God’s judgment does indeed apply to one’s history at the end of one’s earthly life. Why should there be Detention

¹⁴¹ K. Ward, *Religion and Human Nature*, ch. 11-14.

¹⁴² L. Stevenson, ‘A Two-Stage Life After Death?’

as well as Refinement? God's justice¹⁴³ requires that unmerciful souls in particular do not automatically benefit from merciful dispensation from *post-mortem* punishment.

(2) Justice and Theodicy

This leads us to issues of theodicy: is it just for God to permit some souls to undergo Detention, whereas others, through no merit of their own, pass straight to Refinement as beneficiaries of plenary suffrage? The issue reflects the wider question of justice in both Catholic Social Teaching and secular ethics. Attempts to construct a secular ethic from a *tabula rasa* have resulted in two prominent theories: Rawls¹⁴⁴ concludes that true justice requires a strictly equal distribution of goods in the present, Nozick¹⁴⁵ that true justice requires rights to retain the legacy of past personal activity. The Catholic solution¹⁴⁶ is that the State must enforce individual rights, but morally responsible individuals are called to exercise charity, voluntarily derogating from their personal rights for the sake of the common good. Similar economics apply on Earth and eschatologically: God enforces the right to bear the legacy of one's actions (the good worker's wages, the sinner's expiation). Merciful dispensation from one's expiation is strictly undeserved but there is a kind of fairness in that it is granted to those who have themselves been merciful; benefiting from a plenary indulgence is no more unfair than benefiting from an earthly charity for one's temporal or spiritual

¹⁴³ God's justice is not an exercise in gratuitous vengeance, as CCC 1472 makes clear.

¹⁴⁴ A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 246-247.

¹⁴⁵ MacIntyre, 247-248.

¹⁴⁶ CCC 2401-2406.

needs. The pious practice of praying for the Holy Souls ‘most in need’ also offers aid where it is most urgently required.

(3) A Lacuna: Expiation without Purification?

Could it be the case that a soul dies owing God expiation, yet is so converted as to be in need of no purification — an uncatered-for contingency? This problem is averted today — at least for members of the Church — by the fact that a person at such a degree of conversion would surely qualify for the plenary indulgence offered at the moment of death. But what of Catholics of bygone centuries, or people of good-will who have no prayer life? We can plausibly draw an analogy: just as we hope that many will be saved by choosing the good,¹⁴⁷ so ‘pure souls’ are implicitly asking God’s mercy. God’s revealed preference is clearly to set aside any debt requiring expiation; only the unmerciful do not qualify.

(4) The Case of Deathbed Baptism

Are there doctrinal objections to the idea that a person baptised on their deathbed might undergo Refinement? Even if such a person enters the Beatific Vision ‘immediately’,¹⁴⁸ we can understand Refinement as the experience of transition: it is consistent with theological speculation that it is the very entry into the full light of the Beatific Vision¹⁴⁹ which constitutes the fire of Refinement. Beholding the living God, knowing that He has already

¹⁴⁷ CCC 846-848.

¹⁴⁸ We could make an analogy with Benedict XII’s *Benedictus Deus* (ND 2305 = DS 1000) where the pure souls enter heaven ‘immediately’ but here the word translates the Latin *mox* which connotes ‘soon’ rather than ‘without mediation’.

¹⁴⁹ So Seibel; also G. Greshake, cited by Schreiter, 178.

forgiven one's sins and is inviting one to eternal communion with Him, must be a truly radical experience.

(5) Private Revelation: Divine Mercy

One key insight which the 'Last Penny' texts add to the traditional treatment of Purgatory is the importance of having been merciful oneself in order to be mercifully dispensed from Purgatory. The mystic St Faustina Kowalska claimed visions of Jesus and Mary in the 1930s,¹⁵⁰ of which a key strand was devotion to Jesus as the 'Divine Mercy', and a promise that any person who attended Mass on the second Sunday of Easter would, in effect, gain a plenary indulgence.¹⁵¹ The Church has recently affirmed this by granting that day the title, 'Divine Mercy Sunday',¹⁵² and formally granting such an indulgence.¹⁵³ The private revelation attests that God's desire is that no-one should suffer Purgatory; but reflecting the way in which certain exercises are our ordinary means to appropriate salvation (Baptism, Penance), so other practices (indulgences, mercy) are the ordinary means to secure avoidance of expiation.¹⁵⁴ Situated at the close of the Easter Octave, the Divine Mercy devotion is not a Lenten penitential exercise oriented to personal conversion (where one turns from sin by one's own graced efforts),

¹⁵⁰ M. F. Kowalska, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, *passim*.

¹⁵¹ Kowalska, paragraphs 300, 699, 1109.

¹⁵² Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Decree Establishing the Sunday after Easter 'Divine Mercy Sunday'*.

¹⁵³ Apostolic Penitentiary, *Indulgences attached to devotions in honour of Divine Mercy*.

¹⁵⁴ This analogy is not meant to imply that avoiding expiation has the same salvific importance as avoiding perdition, but highlights how God expects us to make use of ordinary means to secure the best outcome.

but the Paschal grace of a ‘second Baptism’¹⁵⁵ ordered to avoiding Purgatory by virtue of the merciful generosity of God. The sacramental confession integral to the Divine Mercy devotion serves as a key which unlocks the grace freely offered by God’s initiative.

(6) Eastern Orthodoxy

Historically, Eastern Orthodoxy rejected the concept of Purgatory because it seemed too closely tied to Origen’s heresy of universal salvation. Orthodoxy holds that saints go directly to heaven; all other souls exist in an undefined underworld until they undergo a purification at the Last Judgment.¹⁵⁶ According to Ombres,¹⁵⁷ the Orthodox pray for *all* the departed, expecting that souls in heaven, hell and the intermediate state may all receive some increase of blessing or decrease of pain. This position accepts a Refinement, but not that it can take place at the Particular Judgment, and so has no role for an expiatory purgatory. It is unclear how prayer for the dead can benefit souls in this scenario, given the logical constraints on the relationship between purification and punishment explored above.

¹⁵⁵ Thanks to Behruz Raf’at for providing this insight and terminology.

¹⁵⁶ Ratzinger, 219; Pelikan, Vol. 2, 279-280; M. Cunningham, *Faith in the Byzantine World*, 150-154.

¹⁵⁷ Ombres, 10-11.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Is the purpose of Purgatory expiation or maturation? We have shown that two aspects of Purgatory may be distinguished: Detention, which is an expiatory state which effects maturation; and Refinement, which is purely for maturation. Indulgences and other forms of suffrage lessen one's Detention; the Gospel texts about paying the last penny, although not a traditional locus for teaching on Purgatory, seem to teach that such an expiatory state exists. It is arguably God's desire that all souls should avoid Detention, either by virtue of their own recourse to His mercy, or else through the generous suffrage offered on their behalf by others.

God provides a process of Refinement which has the sole purpose of maturation (purification), enabling those souls which need make no expiation to become sufficiently detached from all lesser goods to enjoy the totality of the Beatific Vision. This is the experience indicated by I Cor 3:13-15, I Pt 1:7, and the Lukan saying concerning the servant punished with few lashes; it is available even at the Last Judgment.

Purgatory, then, is necessarily a maturing Refinement. It potentially includes an expiatory Detention, but this aspect can be avoided by merciful souls who begged God's mercy during their earthly life, and those for whom suffrage is offered by the living, subject to God's gracious approval. 'Temporal punishment', properly understood, refers to the expiation incurred by a sin, but is also used loosely of the purifying process which renders this expiation, without prejudice to the possibility that the temporal punishment may be forgiven, and the remaining purification be achieved by some non-penal Refinement.

Bibliography

(i) MAGISTERIAL DOCUMENTS

[No author stated.] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Dublin: Veritas, 1994; promulgated by Apostolic Constitution, 11 Oct 1992. (CCC)

[No author stated.] *Lectionary III Study Edition*. London: HarperCollins, 1982.

APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY. *Indulgences attached to devotions in honour of Divine Mercy*. Decree, 29 June 2002.

BENEDICT XII. *Benedictus Deus*. Apostolic Constitution, 1336.

CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS. *Decree Establishing the Sunday after Easter 'Divine Mercy Sunday'*. Decree. 5 May 2000.

INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *La coscienza che Gesù aveva di se stesso e della sua missione*. 1985.

JOHN PAUL II. *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, Apostolic Letter, 28 May 1998.

MYERS, John J. , ed.. *The 1917 or Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001.

NEUNER, Josef and Jacques DUPUIS. *The Catholic Faith*, 6th edition. New York: Alba House, 1996. (ND) Where cross-references are given, 'DS' numbers will indicate paragraph references to the 36th edition of H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, Freiberg im Breisgau, 1976.

PAUL VI. *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*. Apostolic Constitution, 1 Jan 1967. (ID)

PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION. *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. 18 Mar 1994. (IBC)

VATICAN COUNCIL II: *Dei Verbum*. Dogmatic Constitution, 18 Nov 1965. (DV)

VATICAN COUNCIL II: *Lumen Gentium*. Dogmatic Constitution, 21 Nov 1964.

(ii) ANCIENT AND MEDIAEVAL SOURCES, INCLUDING PATRISTIC COMMENTARIES

AUGUSTINE. *Commentary on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* – see D. Kavanagh, 17-199.

AUGUSTINE. *Confessions* – see H. Chadwick.

AUGUSTINE. *On the Care To Be Taken for the Dead* – see R. Deferrari, 351-384.

AUGUSTINE. *Sermon XXI* – see P. Schaff, Vol. VI.

Babylonian Talmud, The – see I. Epstein.

CATHERINE OF GENOA. *Purgation and Purgatory / The Spiritual Dialogue*. London: SPCK, 1979.

CHADWICK, Henry (trans.). *Saint Augustine: Confessions*. Oxford: OUP, 1991.

DEFERRARI, Roy J. (ed.). *Saint Augustine: Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects*. Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1955. (*Fathers of the Church* series, vol. 27.)

Didache, The – see M. Staniforth, 187-199.

EPSTEIN, I. (ed.). *The Babylonian Talmud – Seder Kodashim*. London: Soncino Press, 1948.

GREGORY THE GREAT. *Dialogues* – see O. J. Zimmerman.

GRUBE, G. M. A.. *Plato: Republic*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1992.

KAVANAGH, Denis J. (trans.). *Saint Augustine: Commentary on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount with Seventeen Related Sermons*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1951. (*Fathers of the Church* series, vol. 11.)

LIENHARD, Joseph T. *Origen: Homilies on Luke, Fragments on Luke*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996. (*Fathers of the Church* series, vol. 94.)

NEUSNER, Jacob (ed.). *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew with a New Introduction*. Volumes I & II. Peabody (Mass): Hendrickson Publishers, 2002.

ORIGEN. *Homilies on Luke, Fragments on Luke* – see J. Lienhard.

PLATO. *Republic* – see G. M. A. Grube.

ROBERTS, Alexander and James DONALDSON, (eds.). *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Volume III: *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, original (19th Century?) date not given, reprinted 1976.

ROBERTS, Alexander and James DONALDSON, (eds.). *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Volume XI: *The Writings of Tertullian*, Vol. I. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1869.

ROBERTS, Alexander and James DONALDSON, (eds.). *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Volume XVIII: *The Writings of Tertullian*, Vol. III. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1870.

STANFORTH, Maxwell. *Early Christian Writings*. Revised ed.. London: Penguin, 1987.

Talmud, The – see I. Epstein.

TERTULLIAN. *De baptismo* – ‘On Baptism’, 231-256 in Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Volume XI.

TERTULLIAN. *De coronae militis*, 333-355 in Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Volume XI.

TERTULLIAN. *De monogomia* – ‘On Monogamy’, 21-55 in Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Volume XVIII.

TERTULLIAN (attrib.). *The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas*, 699-706 in Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Volume III.

Tosefta, The – see J. Neusner.

SCHAFF, Philip. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series I, Vol. VI. *Saint Augustin – Exegetical and Homiletic Writings on the Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1887. [Text here consulted on *Early Church Fathers v. 2.0* CD-ROM from *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, Calvin College, since no hard copy was available.]

SCHAFF, Philip. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series I, Vol. X. *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1888, reprinted 1978.

SCHAFF, Philip, with Talbot W. CHAMBERS. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series I, Vol. XII. *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1889, reprinted 1979.

SIMONETTI, Manlio (ed.). *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Matthew 14-28*. Downers Grove (IL): InterVarsity Press, 2002.

ZIMMERMAN, Odo John (trans.). *Saint Gregory the Great: Dialogues*. Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1959. (*Fathers of the Church* series, vol. 39.)

(iii) MODERN WORKS

- ATWELL, R. R.. 'From Augustine to Gregory the Great: an evaluation of the emergence of the Doctrine of Purgatory', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 38 (1987): 173-186.
- AULÉN, Gustaf. *Christus Victor*. Revised ed.. London: SPCK, 1970.
- BARRETT, C. K.. *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. 2nd edition. London: A & C Black, 1971.
- BARTLETT, John R.. *The First and Second Books of the Maccabees*. Cambridge: CUP, 1973.
- BINSKI, Paul. *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation*. London: The British Museum Press, 1996.
- COLLINS, Raymond F.. *First Corinthians*. Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1999.
- CONZELMANN, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.
- CUNNINGHAM, Mary. *Faith in the Byzantine World*. Oxford: Lion, 2002.
- DAVIES, W. D. and Dale C. ALLISON. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. Volume I. Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1988. (D&A I)
- DAVIES, W. D. and Dale C. ALLISON. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. Volume II. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991. (D&A II)
- DE BOER, Martinus C.. 'Ten Thousand Talents? Matthew's Interpretation and Redaction of the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt 18:23-35)'. *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1988): 214-232.
- DERRETT, J. Duncan M.. 'Salted With Fire.' *Theology* LXXVI (1973): 364-368.
- DORAN, Robert. 'The Second Book of Maccabees: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections.' 179-299 in: *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Volume IV. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- EDWARDS, Graham Robert. 'Purgatory: "Birth" or Evolution?' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985): 634-646.
- FEE, Gordon D. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987.
- FITZMYER, Joseph A.. *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV): Introduction, Translation & Notes*. New York: Doubleday, 1985.

- GOLDSTEIN, Jonathan A.. *I Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1976.
- GOLDSTEIN, Jonathan A.. *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1983.
- HAFFNER, Paul. *The Sacramental Mystery*. Leominster: Gracewing, 1999.
- JEREMIAS, Joachim. *The Parables of Jesus*. Revised edition. London: SCM Press, 1963.
- JOHNSON, Luke Timothy. *The Gospel of Luke*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991.
- KENDALL, Daniel. 'The Perpetual Light of Peace'. *The Way* 22 (1982): 245-252.
- KOWALSKA, M. Faustina. *Divine Mercy in My Soul*. Stockbridge: Marian Press, 1987.
- LE GOFF, Jacques. *The Birth of Purgatory*. London: Scolar Press, 1984.
- LUZ, Ulrich. *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990. (Luz I)
- LUZ, Ulrich. *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001. (Luz II)
- MACINTYRE, Alasdair. *After Virtue*. 2nd edition. London: Duckworth, 1985.
- MACK, Burton L.. *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins*. Shaftesbury: Element Books Ltd, 1993.
- MARSHALL, I. Howard. *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978.
- MCBRIEN, Richard. *Catholicism*. 3rd edition. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994.
- MÜLLER, Gerhard Ludwig. "Purgatory". *Theology Digest* 34:1 (Spring 1987), 31-36.
- OMBRES, Robert. 'Latins and Greeks in Debate over Purgatory, 1230-1439.' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35 (1984): 1-14.
- ORR, William F. & James Arthur WALTHER. *I Corinthians: A New Translation*. New York: Doubleday, 1976.
- PELIKAN, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition. Volume 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- PELIKAN, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition. Volume 2: The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- PELIKAN, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition. Volume 3: The Growth of Mediaeval Theology (100-600)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

- RATZINGER, Joseph. *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988.
- SCHREITER, Robert J. 'Purgatory: In Quest of an Image'. *Chicago Studies* 24 (1985): 167-179.
- SEIBEL, Franz. 'Purgatory: an Interpretation'. *Theology Digest* 26:1 (Spring, 1978): 40-42.
- STEVENSON, Leslie. 'A Two-Stage Life After Death?'. *Theology* CIV (2001): 345-351.
- THROCKMORTON, Burton H., Jr.. *Gospel Parallels*. 5th edition. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1992.
- VAN DER WALLE, Anton. *From Darkness to the Dawn*. London: SCM, 1984.
- WARD, Keith. *Religion and Human Nature*. Oxford: OUP, 1998. [This work was not available to me but Chapters 11-14 are cited and critiqued by Stevenson.]
- WRIGHT, Nicholas Thomas. *For All The Saints? Remembering the Christian Departed*. London: SPCK, 2003.