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THE ATTITUDE OF THE EARLY CHURCH TOWARDS THE STATE OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, AS REVEALED IN PATRISTIC WRITING AND EARLY LITURGY

By

Robert Ronald Atwell, B.A.

A Thesis
Submitted
in Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Letters

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Durham University
1979

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SUMMARY

This study is concerned with the place of the departed in the theology and spirituality of the early Christian tradition. In its attempt to describe a pattern of doctrinal development as it emerged in the course of six hundred years, reference will be made primarily to the Biblical witness and to the writings of the Fathers, though extant liturgical material and relevant archaeological evidence will also be discussed. The survey will be necessarily historical in its approach.

The investigation falls into five sections. The first of these involves a preliminary investigation into the background of Christian speculation with a brief examination of the inheritance which the Apostolic Church received from Judaism. Within the perspective of the New Testament the second section goes on to evaluate the way in which the received material was re-worked and transformed, with the third chapter tracing the continued evolution of Christian thought to the end of the second century. The final sections of the study are devoted to a comparative analysis of thought about the dead in the developing traditions of East and West, with particular reference to Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom in the East (chapter 4) and Cyprian, Augustine and Gregory the Great in the West (chapter 5). A brief conclusion is appended to the survey in order to focus some of the issues raised in the course of the work, and to examine their relevance to current theological discourse on life after death.

P R E F A C E

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor C.F.D. Moule, Emeritus Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge for his guidance in the examination of New Testament material; to Dr. J. W. Rogerson and Dr. A. L. Loades both of the Department of Theology in the University of Durham for their encouragement and support; and above all to my supervisor, Mr. Gerald Bonner, of the same University, for his constant help and advice.

In proper names and all technical terms standard modern spelling is used, except in quotations where the form used is as in the source quoted. A list of abbreviations is printed overleaf.

ABBREVIATIONS

AF	The Apostolic Fathers, tr. & ed., Kirsopp Lake
CAC	Corpus Apologetarum Christianorum
CC	Corpus Christianorum, series Latina
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CQ	The Church Quarterly
CQR	The Church Quarterly Review
DGCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
DR	The Downside Review
DSAM	Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Ascétique et Mystique, ed., Viller
DTC	Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, ed., Vacant, Mangenot & Amann
ECR	Eastern Churches Review
ERE	Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed., Hastings
ET	English Text
GMD	Gregorii Magni Dialogi, ed., Moricca
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
NTS	New Testament Studies
ODCC	Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 2nd ed., Cross & Livingstone
PG	Patrologiae Graecae cursus completus, ed., Migne
PL	Patrologiae Latinae cursus completus, ed., Migne
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
TS	Theological Studies

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In a society in which Christian belief in life after death receives only passing acknowledgement and at a time when people in general seem content to trivialise or ignore death itself, questions relating to the meaning of death and the possibility of an existence beyond it, and problems inherent in the exposition of a tradition which would claim to speak coherently in these matters, would seem to be of special relevance and warrant our urgent attention.

The Christian faith continues to make the claim that something has happened to death itself. It is precisely this which, it is said, constituted the peculiar meaning of the death of Jesus Christ, upon which faith is based, which faith proclaims and upon which it has continued to reflect. The church still proclaims 'the death of the Lord' in expectation that the Lord will 'come' (I Cor. xi. 26). To this proclamation of the death of the Lord there also belongs the cry of victory. Put in the form of a question it is seen as an answer: 'O death where is thy victory? O death where is thy sting?' (I Cor. xv. 55). For the Christian believer, faith in the resurrection is the confession that with the death of Jesus Christ, death is no longer the same. The question of death is answered in a quite definitive way because it also implies that something has changed with regard to the fact that all men must die. The answer has its own particular character, and it is this which will be examined in the course of this study of the theology and spirituality of the early Christian tradition.

Christian proclamation, however, can never afford to permit theology to let the question of death answer itself. Even if the essence of the Christian faith has from the first been determined by the fact that this is a question which is believed to have been answered, the theologian is not excused his task of giving appropriate expression to this answer in terms and language relevant to his age. This study in its concern with the concepts

and language of the early church will therefore seek to illuminate the theological framework of the first Christian thinkers. To this end a variety of social, cultural, religious and intellectual factors will be assessed for their formative influence on the Christian tradition. Criteria will be sought with which to assess the products of patristic speculation; the coherence of their ideas will be investigated, and so, it is hoped, some sort of evaluation of their discourse will be formed.

It may be that discussion of the thought of the Fathers can be no more than an historical exercise of purely antiquarian value, our world-picture and understanding having changed so dramatically in the course of time that the cluster of ideas and systems which they formulated are now found to be largely redundant. On the other hand, it may be the case that with analysis, certain propositions, occasional insights or even a particular combination of perspectives, will be found not only to have enduring value but also to offer hints for the construction of a contemporary theology, or at any rate to make some minor contribution to such a procedure. For it is apparent that the person who is left with no valid answer to the question of death and what may or may not lie beyond it will supply himself with alternative answers or, more seriously, will try to avoid the question. Birth and death may be conspicuous in their familiarity - every day innumerable children are born into the world and every day countless numbers of human beings of all ages die - yet simple observation shows birth alone to have met with the general acceptance of modern society. Death, on the other hand, is inappropriate in an emancipated world and is greeted with embarrassment. The majority of people when confronted with the fact of death choose either to disguise its existence beneath the aesthetic trappings of funeral parlour and mortician,[1] or else enshroud its crude reality within a 'conspiracy of silence'.[2] Examination of contemporary literature confirms and reflects this wider impoverishment for we have even managed to lose the sense of the literary and dramatic in our approach to death. Shakespeare, Sir Walter Ralegh, Sir Thomas Browne, John Donne, all

display, in their various ways, an attitude to death very different from the coyness which we evince today. In their writings is to be discerned a closer familiarity than most of us have with the grossness of death, and at the same time an ability to use this gross fact of mortality to create something fine and majestic even on the human and cultural level.[3] Our generation, by contrast has turned death into a matter of hygiene and statistics. We have lost the poetry and the pathos of an earlier, harsher age. Even the church, it would seem, is unable to maintain an authentic temper in the face of current funerary convention. Last year, for example, witnessed the dedication by an American Roman Catholic bishop of a new multi-storey mausoleum for catholics, equipped with wall-to-wall carpeting, air-conditioning, and even continuous piped music, while in California, Walt Disney's body lies in a deep freeze awaiting some future resuscitation.

In all this is to be found evidence of man's continued retreat from reality and at the same time, his confused search for a meaning beyond death. In this and in the many other phenomena which could be cited at this point, we are presented with constant reminders of the fact that at the heart of man's very existence death still lies as that moment which, despite his many efforts, is wholly beyond his control. In a very real sense therefore, a study such as this may be said to have an underlying pastoral motive inasmuch as by drawing out (albeit implicitly) the contrast between contemporary attitudes and expectations of death, and those of earlier generations, aspects of the Christian tradition which can best be used today in exploring with non-Christian people the meaning of death and life beyond death, may appear in a clearer light and fresh reality be imparted to the situation in which we find ourselves enmeshed.

Having said this, it should be emphasised that it is not the intention of this study to involve itself in some vast creative theological exploration. The scope of its survey is limited to a consideration of individual patristic theologians and their writings in an attempt to trace the development of certain themes from their

initial reception at the hands of Judaeo-Christian communities through to their eventual codification six centuries later. The procedure will be expository not argumentative, primarily historical in its approach and only secondarily speculative. It will be a case of learning something about the way in which the Fathers in their various situations, approached the problem of death and developed their theology in relation to their ministry to the bereaved and dying; and on this basis of seeing how we in our situation might think through the problems again with (it is hoped) some measure of the breadth, originality and insight exemplified in an earlier age.

Admittedly, this is an area of theology in which there is an acknowledged lack of definitive criteria and it may well be that even after careful and systematic analysis of the material, no confident conclusions will emerge. But as John Baillie has warned: 'This is a region in which agnosticism is assuredly the better part of wisdom.'[4] Thus, if to nearly all the questions that this study will give issue, we are eventually constrained to answer that we do not know, then this answer will be offered without any confusion of face or as if to imply that not knowing does not matter, or even that it is better not to know! It would rather admit with St. Paul that in this domain we walk not by sight but by faith (II Cor. v. 7). On the other hand, one is not at liberty to fill out the logical gaps with devotional material; and it will not suffice to accept at the outset 'impenetrable mystery' as a sufficient reply to the questions which are being raised. If the charge of self-delusion levelled against Christianity is to be repudiated then the questions must be asked and answers must be sought and sifted.

Man has always had an intense desire to learn what lies beyond the grave and on the other side of silence; and mythological imagery and legend have always given an abundant answer to his desire. The result was that for most peoples, the world to which death introduced them was clearly mapped out to earthly knowledge.

The Christian church was no exception in this: the salutary agnosticism of Paul was soon replaced by a gnosticism which offered extensive and detailed knowledge of the world to come. Examination of the Christian tradition will reveal therefore a unique blend of healthy agnosticism and fond gnostic speculation, and all beneath the broad banner of doctrinal development! Analysis of the doctrinal, apologetic and polemical writings of the Fathers, the deepening liturgical life of the Church which was itself uniquely formative of Christian theology,[5] and what can only be described as a penumbra in Christian thought will, furthermore, present extensive problems for interpretation and explanation. Positively, however, it should be possible with a broad sweep of the Christian tradition to gain a better articulated and more dramatic understanding of the thought of the early Church and the way it gradually evolved. For it is not enough merely to know what statements about the state of the departed were made; the problem is to construe them properly, to know what was central to the tradition and what was peripheral, what stood repeated examination and what was subject to modification, with what degree of certitude and on the basis of what contentions this or that assertion was made. Only by grappling with these problems will this discussion succeed in its attempt to evaluate the teaching of Christianity and to clarify various issues of that theological astigmatism which for too long has pervaded this entire subject.

INTRODUCTION

FOOTNOTES

1 See for example, Jessica Mitford, The American Way of Death, London 1963; Evelyn Waugh, The Loved One .

2 Simon Stephens, Death Comes Home, London 1972, p.33.

3 See for example, Shakespeare's sonnet, Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth; Sir Walter Raleigh, A History of the World, bk.V, c.6; Sir Thomas Browne, Hydriotaphia : Urne Buriall; Donne's sonnet, Death be not proud.

4 John Baillie, And the Life Everlasting, London 1934, p.198.

5 This fact will become increasingly apparent as the survey progresses. The old Latin saying, Lex orandi lex credendi is, no doubt, applicable here, for it declares that prayer has an important, indeed decisive influence on believing both within the life of the individual and of the community as a whole. To quote Austin Farrer: 'Prayer and dogma are inseparable. They alone can explain each other. Either without the other is meaningless and dead.' (Lord, I Believe, London 1962, p.9). Every act of prayer implies some belief, although the belief may ~~not~~ only be present in the unconsciousness; and it may be that in the act of praying the belief first becomes explicit and definable. Similarly, to put the saying the other way round, it can also be said that it is in prayer that beliefs become most real and meaningful, for Christian prayer depends on Christian faith. Clearly there have been many people down the ages who have prayed only sometimes or perhaps even regularly, but who have not shared all the beliefs of the community of faith or who would not accept them in the way in which they have been expressed. Consequently one of the problems in the survey (at least with regard to individual prayers) will be to decide the extent to which any given prayer may be truly taken as being 'normative' of the mainstream of Christian liturgy. The inter-relation of theology and prayer will become very important in our evaluation of the Eastern tradition where, to this day, certain doctrines, although never formally defined, have yet been held by the Church with an unmistakable inner conviction which is just as binding as an explicit formulation. Orthodoxy for example has made few explicit formulations about the Eucharist and other sacraments, about the next world, the Mother of God, the saints, and the faithful departed; orthodox belief on these points is contained mainly in the prayers and hymns used at orthodox services.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INHERITANCE OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The age in which the Christian church emerged was an age of syncretism. The older religions of the Mediterranean world were for many being dissolved in the acids of sceptism; and newer faiths were encroaching from the East and in varying degrees establishing themselves within the ambient of Greek philosophy, which itself was becoming more and more religious. Even Judaism standing in the nexus between East and West could not stand wholly outside this process of cross-fertilization, and Rabbinic as well as Hellenistic Judaism displays the effects of foreign influence. Furthermore, in the two centuries prior to the advent of Christianity, many beliefs which had been only incipient in the Old Testament, were being articulated and were contributing to the formation of a theological consensus in orthodox Judaism. Nowhere was this more apparent than in belief about life after death and the state of those who had died. In fact study of the literature of the intertestamental period is rendered difficult not by any paucity of unambiguous references, but by the 'plethora of speculations'.[1]

According to Hebrew thought, man was not a dichotomy of body and soul (or spirit), or a trichotomy of body, soul and spirit, but a unitary personality. In the words of Wheeler Robinson, 'Man is what he is by the union of certain quasi-physical properties of life with certain physical organisms, psychically conceived; separate them, and you are left not with either soul or body in our sense, but with impersonal energies on the one hand, and with disjecta membra on the other ... the dissolution of this personal unity is the end of any real personal existence for Hebrew thought.'[2] In other words, to put it simply, a man's nepheš departed at death, not in the sense that his 'soul' left his body, but rather in the sense that his life was thought to ebb away leaving behind a condition of utter weakness and lifelessness (Gen. 35 : 18; Jer.15 : 9) With the destruction of the unity of man's being through the disintegration of his nepheš, he ceased to exist in terms of any vital personality. What continued after death was only his 'shade' understood in terms of some kind of 'double' or replica of the once living man.[3]

The religion of Israel also included, ab initio, death in the capacity and power of God. It excluded from its teaching any dualistic belief or magical concept, which necessarily posited the existence of forces that could influence the deity or detract from his omnipotence. Death and Sheol (the abode of the dead)[4] were both under Yahweh's authority. Thus, it could be maintained that the length of the days of a man's life was predetermined, and that only his wicked deeds might lead to their reduction. Alternatively, a man's good deeds might bring about the completion of his days and his delivery from violent death. In this sense, although death was not seen to be a consequence of sin (man's sin did not cause death to come into the world; the decree of death would have existed even without him, man's act serving only as an instrument for implementing it), death was ~~invariably~~ not infrequently linked to the doctrine of reward and punishment. Over and above this, death was understood just as part of the order of the universe, and accordingly measured spans were allotted to human life by God. When the appointed time arrived death could not be postponed, for new generations awaited to take their place.[5] In a similar way, Sheol was declared to be within Yahweh's jurisdiction; not that this offered any comfort to the dead, for by reason of their diminished 'existence' they were excluded from any knowledge of the faithfulness or lovingkindness of God. Hence all the gloomy descriptions of the fate of the shades in Sheol which are so prevalent throughout the Old Testament.[6] In fact for the greater part of the Old Testament, we are forced to admit with G. Gardner that 'men who believed intensely in the love of God and the immortality of their race cared little or not at all about the eternal destiny of the individual.'[7]

It was the gradual evolution of this complex of ideas in the two hundred years or so prior to the birth of Christ which contributed the basis for a belief in life after death quite unlike anything that had gone before. Of importance in this development was the deepening sense of personal communion with God coming to be felt by many pious Jews. Their increasing awareness of the

sustaining personal loving care of Yahweh conflicted with certain tennets of traditional Jewish thought, inasmuch as they discovered a fundamental inconsistency in their conception of God whose purpose in creation included as a prominent feature the emergence of a personal life capable of response to him, but whose purpose apparently also allowed for the extinction of those relationships at death. The genesis of this particular quality of personal hope proved to be supremely formative of Christian thought.

The growing dissatisfaction with received theories of reward and punishment was similarly influential in the creation of Jewish belief about the afterlife. The presence of the book of Job in the Old Testament canon is sufficient testimony to the problems involved in the application of a rigid theory of retribution to the pattern of this life. The pressure of unrequited evil or innocent suffering could in part be accommodated within the existing theological framework. For example, Rabbi Johanan, who posited free will for the individual, could regard the death of the righteous as a form of reward, since it brought to an end their exhausting struggle against their 'evil inclination'.[8] The death of the wicked on the other hand, he conceived in terms of ~~them~~ their ceasing to vex God (but actually this implied punishment since they received the satisfaction due to their provocative actions). The rabbis inevitably hesitated to suggest that death was <u>per se</u> punishment for sin. Rabbis like the Amoraim Rabbi Johanan and Resh Laqish[9] tried to get round the problem by further differentiating between the death of the righteous and the death of others, by following the view of Rabbi Hiyya that the righteous are called living even in their death.[10] Ultimately, however, the tension only received relief in the context of a doctrine of the after-life which admitted moral differentiation (unlike traditional conceptions of Sheol in which <u>all</u> the dead, rich or poor, king or commoner, just or impious were deemed to be held)[11] and which rectified the injustices of this world. In different ways the remoulding of the doctrine of Sheol and the affirmation of a belief in a future resurrection provided the means to a solution.

Evidence of a belief in personal survival in Sheol which included a moral differentiation in the state of the departed is to be found throughout the literature of the inter-testamental period. In the extra-biblical apocalyptic in particular, one finds for example, the dead no longer described as 'shades' (rephā'îm) but as 'souls' or 'spirits'.[12] The change in terminology, no doubt the influence of Hellenistic Judaism,[13] constituted more than a change of linguistic categories. It implied a doctrine of personal survival ~~as~~ of individual conscious beings. It envisaged a continuity between life on earth and life in Sheol in which the departed, now seen as responsive and responsible 'souls' had the possibility of maintaining a life of fellowship with God (whose jurisdiction beyond the grave had already been acknowledged). In I Enoch 22 : 7, for example, it is said that 'the spirit which went forth from Abel, whom his brother Cain slew', made suit against him until such time as Cain's descendants should be utterly destroyed from the earth. Sheol, to which Abel's spirit went at death, is not seen as a place of forgetfulness as in the Old Testament, but rather as a state of conscious being and individual identity. It is furthermore, a state which acknowledges a distinction between those worthy of fellowship with God, and those who by virtue of their lives have disclaimed that love. As in life so also in death, men are separated into two distinct categories, the wicked and the righteous and they accordingly suffer pain or enjoy repose. To refer to I Enoch again as but one of many examples that could be cited, it is said there that the good 'shall live and rejoice, neither shall their spirits perish' and how the wicked 'shall be in great tribulation, and into darkness and chains and burning fire where there is grevious judgement shall their spirits enter.'[14] In Sheol, a man receives his true reward or his just punishment,[15] and is fittingly accommodated in Paradise or Abraham's bosom, or confined to Hell and Gehenna.[16]

Evidence of an unambiguous nature, for a belief in a resurrection of the dead cannot be traced back with any certainty beyond the second century before Christ.[17] The book of Daniel, compiled probably around the year 165 B.C. offers the first undisputed reference to the belief.

> And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 18.

This passage, set as it is against a background of persecution and the Maccabean rebellion indicates the other major factor which contributed to the emergence of a doctrine of an afterlife; namely, outrage at the martyrdom of so many innocent Jews. Theologically, it could be said that this represented only a particular exemplification of the wider problem of innocent suffering. Historically, however, it is apparent that it constituted the crucial challenge to existing thought. Those who had suffered martyrdom it was felt, must still in some way share in the ultimate triumph of God's people when he would at least establish his kingdom on earth. There had to be recompense for the individual as well as a promise of permanence and restoration for the nation. Faith in the justice of God, hope in his continued purpose for Israel and religious personalism combined to precipitate a synthesis of the eschatologies of nation and individual in a doctrine of bodily resurrection. On the one hand, there were many in Israel who in the persecutions had laid down their lives in faithfulness to Yahweh; surely death could not rob them of the inheritance of Israel? God would raise up the martyrs so that, together with the living, they might share in the blessings of his kingdom.[19] On the other hand, there were enemies of the saints who found in death too easy a fate; surely they would be raised too, but to receive the degradation and punishment they deserved? It is to be observed that the passage in question envisages only the resurrection of some of those who sleep in the dust. It is only the notably good and the notably bad who are to be raised to reap the reward of their deeds. Beyond this the passage presumes a normal view of Sheol in which good and bad alike are congregated together and in which the shades of all other men not raised, will remain as before in the realm of death; the only difference being that Sheol is no longer considered to be the eternal abode of <u>all</u> who pass through death. For some it is only of temporary duration.

The basic eschatological pattern seen in the book of Daniel is to be found reproduced throughout the apocolyptic/pseudepigraphal tradition but not without variation.[20] II Maccabees for example, speaks of the righteous being raised up to an ever-

lasting renewal of life but while the fate of the unrighteous is described in general terms as punishment, there is no mention of their resurrection.[21] Some authors picture a resurrection to eternal life for the righteous in terms of a participation in an earthly messianic kingdom;[22] others look to a more heavenly beyond or even a temporary earthly kingdom to be succeeded by an eternal state in heaven.[23] In both cases Sheol invariably takes on only an intermediate status in which there is a preliminary distribution of rewards and punishments to be consummated and completed at the Last Day.[24]

This changed conception of Sheol as a state intermediate between earthly life and future fulfilment, in which moral distinctions were recognised, inevitably gave rise to the further question of a possible progression from one moral state to another in the after-life. The literature of the period presents us with every shade of opinion on this subject, ranging from approval through agnosticism to flat denial. For example, in the midst of all the apoclyptic speculation one can find even in quite a late book like Baruch, the traditional statement that 'the dead that are in Hades, whose breath is taken from their bodies, will give unto the Lord neither glory nor righteousness.'[25] On the other hand, one finds testimony to the esteem with which the patriarchs were venerated,[26] with Enoch, Abel, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all occupying high positions in the Other World. In the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, for instance, the patriarchs are specially mentioned among those who beg God to have mercy on the souls in torment. Similarly, in the Apocalypse of Moses, the angels are said to pray for the departed Adam.[27] Such prayer would seem to sanction a belief in the possibility of spiritual progression after death. Of greater interest, however, is the account in the Testament of Abraham which describes how the souls of the departed undergo two tests, one by the judgement of fire and one by the judgement of the balance in which a man's good deeds are weighed over against the bad. There is pointed out to the seer an intermediate class of souls whose merits and sins are equally balanced. The prayers of the righteous on behalf of such souls may mean for them an entry

into salvation.[28]

One encounters the same sort of discussion in the rabbinic tradition but for the rabbis the question of spiritual progression in the after-life was framed more within the terms of the power of repentance. For them it was another aspect of the problem of the reconciliation of the notion of repentance with a system of reward and punishment, and the relationship between punishment and foregiveness.[29] To generalise, however, it would be true to say that in both the rabbinic and the apocalyptic traditions, writers do not favour the view that repentance is possible after death or that spiritual progression is a viable possibility. A man's destiny is as irrevocably determined in Sheol as it is at the Last Judgement by the kind of life which he lived on earth.

Reference to the practice of offering prayer for the dead (which constitutes the final point in this analysis) has already been made in passing. It is noteworthy that the Old Testament was largely silent on the subject, probably because it was a practice originally associated with paganism, ancestor worship, necromancy and all things incompatible with the faith of Israel. Once people began to grasp the continuity of human life before and after death, however, and once Sheol was no longer seen as a state devoid of fellowship with Yahweh, then as a nation who believed in the efficacy of prayer it is apparent that many Jews were moved, if only by the instincts of natural affection, to remember in their prayers their departed relatives and friends.

One of the earliest references to the practice occurs in II Mac. 12 : 39 - 45. It relates an incident concerning soldiers killed in the Maccabean Revolt. According to the writer, when it was discovered that under the garments of some of the Israelite soldiers who had fallen in battle, were consecrated tokens of idols, it was said that this was the cause of their death. The writer then describes how their companions 'turned to prayer, beseeching that the sin which had been committed might be wholly blotted out.' Judas Maccabaeus also collected two thousand

drachmas of silver which he sent to Jerusalem for a sin-offering to be made on behalf of the dead men:

> In doing this he acted very well and honourably, taking account of the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.

From this passage it would appear that the ordinary Jew did not consider it idle and superfluous to pray for the dead. Such prayer had meaning and ~~directive~~ purpose: obtaining the remission of sin, in this instance. The exegesis of the passage is admittedly, not beyond dispute. It is the opinion of some scholars that the writer although primarily asserting his belief in the coming resurrection of the dead, nevertheless, as part of his argument draws upon the common custom of praying for the dead as an important item of illustrative material. In opposition to this, other scholars have tried to contend that the incident is introduced by the author not as an obiter dictum, but as a deliberate attempt at providing authorization for a practice with respect to the fallen in battle (at least), which the writer realised was novel or unusual and might need some doctrinal justification. In other words the practice of praying for the departed represented if not a minority activity, then at least a theologically dubious activity. This latter interpretation ~~might~~ could be ~~more acceptable~~ credible were it not for the ~~support~~ evidence of ~~traditional~~ Jewish liturgical practice, for Jewish service-books have from the first contained prayers for the dead (Kaddish and Haskarath Neshamoth).[30]

According to J.H. Hertz the mourners, Kaddish prayer is 'daily recited by hundreds of thousands, old and young, rich and poor, throughout the world .... and even those Jews who are lax and indifferent in religious observance deem it a sacred act of reverence towards their departed father or mother to say Kaddish every day for a year and then one day a year, on the Yahrzeit.'[31]

This, as Hertz himself admits, constitutes modern usage, the actual date of the emergence of the practice being uncertain, even if early. With regard to the form of the prayer itself, snatches of the Kaddish are to be found in the legends of Talmudic teachers and echoes of it in the writings of the early mystics, but the prayer in its entirety does not appear until the eighth century after Christ. According to Hertz, the prayer as it has been received represents the product of 'gradual growth, continued from generation to generation, from age to age,'[32] but beyond this is pure speculation.

With regard to the substance of Jewish prayer for the dead, it would be no exaggeration to say that the Kaddish itself is exhaustive in glorification of God. It is concerned with supplication for God's kingdom and for peace upon the House of Israel. There is no reference to death or to the Hereafter as such. Faced with death it asserts only 'submission to God's eternal will.'[33] But there is another side of the Kaddish other than what it means for the living which must be considered, and this Hertz illustrates by reference to a folk legend concerning Rabbi Akiba (AD.50-135):

> Rabbi Akiba once beheld the shadowy figure of a man that carried a load of wood upon his shoulders, and groaning under his load. 'What aileth thee?' asked the Rabbi. 'I am one of those forlorn souls condemned for his sins to the agony of hell-fire. I must procure the wood, and myself prepare place of torment.' 'And is there no hope for thee?' 'Yes, if my little son, whom I left behind an infant, is taught to utter the Kaddish and cause the assembly of worshippers to respond "Amen, may God's great Name be praised for ever and ever."'
> Rabbi Akiba resolved to search for the family and infant son of the deceased. He found that the mother had married again, this time a heathen; and that the child had not even been initiated into the Covenant of Abraham. Rabbi Akiba took the child under his care, and taught him to lisp the Kaddish. Soon a heavenly message assured him that, through the son's prayer, the father had obtained salvation.[34]

Apart from its uncanny similarity with later Christian visions of the Hereafter and Purgatory, this legend is interesting for the insight it offers into the way in which some rabbinic circles could envisage prayer for the departed effecting a change

in the state of the deceased by securing the forgiveness of sins and the remission of punishment. The concluding remarks of Hertz are particularly apposite in this respect: 'This prayer, in short, is the thread in Israel that binds the generations "each to each in natural piety", and makes the hearts of parents and children beat in eternal unison.'[35] It is this same personal orientation which will be seen to characterise early Christian prayers for the departed.

It should not be thought from this that Jewish prayer for the dead, any more than Jewish belief in a life after death or resurrection, was universal or consistent. To posit this would be to deny the pluriformity of the age. For example, the Sadduccees who did not admit the resurrection, as a matter of logic must have totally repudiated the validity of prayer for the departed. They were not alone in this opinion either. Among some of the apocalyptic writers one finds a flat denial of the efficacy of prayer for those in Sheol. The writer of II Baruch, for example, dismisses the possibility.

> There shall not be there again .... change of ways, nor place for prayer, nor sending of petitions, nor receiving of knowledge, nor giving of love, nor place for repentance for the soul, nor supplication for offences, nor intercession of the fathers, nor prayer of the prophets, nor help of the righteous.[36]

For all the severity of this statement ~~and the diversity of thought which it reflects~~, the evidence at least as collated here would seem to point to the custom of praying for the dead being an accepted practice in some Jewish circles both before and after the birth of Christ. Obviously the custom was neither universal nor normative. Nevertheless, in those parts of the Jewish community where prayer for the departed was deemed to be theologically appropriate, it was a practice which probably emerged concurrently (or soon after) the deepening of Israel's faith in an afterlife, both of which developments testified to a trust in a personal God of love who, it was believed, gave substance and meaning to relationships between individuals and who was deemed capable and

willing to sustain those relationships beyond death into eternity.

So was formed the complex inheritance of beliefs, customs and confused speculation which the Apostolic Church received from Judaism, at the hands of its Judaeo-Christian communities, an inheritance often more of the order of questionings than pronouncements, embracing both apocalyptic speculation, rabbinic codification and Sadduccean retrenchment. It was not an intact commodity of thought which merely awaited Christian orientation, for it offered disbelief as well as hope. It was rather the ~~faithful~~ product of a people struggling to express its hope in the love and justice of God, in the face of death and in an age which was itself confused.

CHAPTER 1

FOOTNOTES:

1 J. Y. Simpson, Man and the attainment of Immortality, London 1923, p. 283.

2 H. Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, London 1934, p.69.

3 This understanding of the nepheš (breath) as the principle of life, the centre of consciousness, was supplemented by another line of approach which concerned the different organs of the body, crediting each with different contributions to the conscious life. The Hebrews did not distinguish between the intellectual and the vital functions of the body. Thus they could speak of the (physical) heart (lēv) as the actual centre of conscious life in general, and of both its emotional and intellectual aspects. The heart is man's inner being from which spring his will and action. Originally the term seems to have been as general in its application as the term nepheš. But as a result of the syncretism of these two parallel ideas, 'heart' and nepheš come to denote predominantly the intellectual and the emotional aspects of consciousness respectively, yet without the complete surrender of their more comprehensive usage (e.g. Deut. 6 : 5). Death was constituted by the disintegration of this functional unity.

Yet a third perspective is offered in the anthropological usage of the term ruach. In post-exilic literature this term would seem to have been used synonymously with the term nepheš, but its primitive meaning ~~is~~ (air itself, wind, breath, coolness, space and spirit) ~~were~~ was never lost, inasmuch as this designated the more exceptional and unusual endowments of human nature which suggested God as their immediate source. Thus death was the withdrawal of a man's ruach, his breath, his spirit, which God had breathed into Adam at creation (Gen. 2 : 7, 'breath of life' nešāmāh). cf. Ps. 104 : 29, 30; Ez. 37 : 5. Yahweh with his life-giving spirit had the power of life and death. Without him there could be no life, no creative existence.

4 The actual meaning of the term shéôl is uncertain. Neither the derivation from shā'al, 'ask', nor the comparison with shō'al, 'hollow hand' really fits; though there may be some connection with shā'â, 'be desolate'. In the last analysis, however, it is not the etymology but the actual usage of the term which determines its meaning. For example, 'To go down into Sheol' meant the same as 'to die'. Such words as shahat, 'pit' and 'āpār 'dust' were used more or less synonymously with Sheol, thus indicating the close association with the grave. Israel could also practically identify the wilderness with death and

Sheol, or at least attribute to it predicates belonging to death. (e.g. Job 12 : 24 ff.) Such an understanding of death in spatial terms, as a 'realm', may reflect the Babylonian concept of Arallû. Certainly Hebrew thought associated Sheol with the depths of the earth (Deut. 32 : 22) or the great cosmic ocean on which the earth was supposed to stand (II Sam. 22 : 5f; Ps. 88 : 6). The question is, 'was this a way of speaking or actually a way of thinking?' for the two are not the same.

5 Ps. 89 : 48; Ps. 90 : 10; Gen. 3 : 19.

6 Job 10 : 21, 22, 7 : 9, 16 : 22; Eccles. 9 : 5, 10.

7 G. Gardner, 'The New Testament and Prayers for the Departed,' CQR (1916) 83, p. 21. In reflecting upon the Old Testament it is important to remember the emphasis that it laid upon the collective. For if personal immortality was not, for the most part, the concern of the Hebrew writers, there was the thought that as a man was a member of a family, a member of the body of the community, so he lived on in his children. To die childless, or prematurely, or to make a bad end, was therefore really serious. On the other hand, when death drew near to one 'old and full of days' it was really a gracious fulfilment, since from the start, life was regarded as something limited, meted out to man, to which there could, therefore, also be a condition of satiety.

8 For a review of the rabbis' thought on the two inclinations in man, see E.E. Urbach, The Sages, their concepts and beliefs, ET, Jerusalem, 1975, (i), pp. 471 - 83.

9 Although these rabbis lived in the 3rd century A.D. and are not strictly part of the inter-testamental period, their thought may reflect earlier beliefs.

10 This is reflected in Ecclus. 44.

11 Is. 14 : 9 ff; Eccles. 9 : 2 ff.

12 It is not suggested that this change in terminology was universal or that the use and meaning of terms were consistently uniform.

13 For a comparison of the Rabbinic, Hellenistic and Gnostic anthropological concepts as relating to life after death, see Urbach, pp. 248 - 51.

14 I Enoch 103 : 4, 7, 8.

15 The rabbis had a very developed notion of rewards and punishments, which had important consequences for their view of life after death.

See Urbach, pp. 436 - 44. The rigidity of any given system was dependent on the power ascribed to repentance, and in this there ~~were~~ was a cross-section of opinions: some liberal, some more hard-line. (see pp. 462 - 71) e.g., sometimes repentance was thought to remit the sin but not the punishment.

16 Within the broad distinction of righteous and wicked were often more varied moral distinctions which produced a more complex 'topography' of the after-life reflected by a wealth of conceptions: Paradise, Abraham's Bosom, Hell and Gehenna.
Paradise: though the word appears in the Old Testament (Son of Songs 4 : 13; Eccles. 2 : 5; Neh. 2 : 8) in its Hebrew form (pardês) it is not probably Semitic in origin. In all probability, a term borrowed by Jews from Persia. In its original signification it simply meant a beautiful park, orchard or pleasure garden. The word gained a recognised place in the language of Hellenistic Jews, and was adopted by those who translated the Pentateuch into Greek as the equivalent of the 'garden' that the Lord God 'planted east of Eden'; and they used it in other portions of LXX for any allusion to that fair home of primeval man. Thus 'paradise' became a designation for that happy region which had been forfeited through sin. By an easy succession of ideas the word came to be associated in the century before Christ with the future home of rest and tranquil enjoyment. In apocalyptic and pseudepigraphal literature the term signifies the abode of the spirits of the righteous awaiting the coming resurrection. N.B. term sometimes had a future and final status, e.g., Testament of Twelve Patriarchs, IV Esdras 7 : 36; 8 : 52; sometimes only intermediate status, e.g., Apoc. of Moses 35 : 2, 37 : 5.
Abraham's bosom: commonly held that Abraham, as the father of the righteous, would welcome his children at the hour of their death or when they were purified and made ready for their reward. The mention of Abraham in this context suggests continuity in the covenant of God and union with the father of the faithful. The particular expression Abraham's bosom or lap reflects the image of a feast or social meal at which Jews were wont to recline rather than to sit, and to lay their heads each on his neighbour's lap. It maintains the thought of fellowship, joy and pleasure.
Hell: as a place of torment first appears in I Enoch 22 : 9 - 13. However, closely associated with the term is another: Gehenna, which derives from the Hebrew Ge Hinnom, meaning 'the valley of Hinnom'. It was there that children were said to have been made to 'pass through the fire' as a sacrifice to the god Molech (cf., II Kings 16 : 3; Jer. 7 : 31). In apocalyptic literature, term comes to be used as a description of the place of burning torment reserved for the wicked after death.
All these terms were to receive the sanction of the NT and so pass into the vocabulary of the early Church. The variety of the concepts behind the terms is no small indication of the diversity of thought about life after death, a diversity exacerbated in Hellenistic circles by the adoption of Greek and (later) Roman terminology of the Underworld, e.g., Hades, Tartarus.

Hades: the gathering place for the departed in the Underworld. Descriptions of the locality vary. Sometimes it is said to be situated in the distant west, beyond the earth-encircling stream, but the usual representation places it in the heart of the earth or under the earth. Its condition is painted in the darkest colours. It is a barren, joyless state where the rivers of hate, sorrow, lamentation and fire flow. It delineates an existence of utter sorrow and anguish.

Tartarus: often pictured as a distant murky abyss, with gates of iron and floor of brass, lying as deep beneath Hades as the earth lies deep beneath heaven. Sins are punished there and the tortures of Tartarus differ little in horror and ferocity from those of the Hebrew Gehenna. It could be conceived in a two-fold aspect as both a purgatory and as a place of apparently endless torment. Those souls who in judgement were pronounced neither evil nor good were committed to the Acherusian Lake, there to dwell until they were absolved; whereas the incurably corrupt together with those guilty of offences not irremediable were hurled into Tartarus, the latter however, only until mercy had been granted.

No one concept or set of terminology was static. There was considerable over-lap and engagement of terms which infected diversity with further confusion. Acceptance and utilisation of the vocabulary will be seen to have been widespread in the early church. The question which must be tackled later then is, to what extent did the acceptance of a vocabulary also include the uncritical adoption of the thought-forms behind it?

17 According to the prophets of the Old Testament the hope for the future lay in the nation and in the coming kingdom which God would establish upon the earth; its glories would be shared by those righteous Israelites who were living at that time and also, some thought, by the Gentiles who would come to acknowledge Israel as the chosen people of God. Beyond this, Isaiah 24 - 27 which reveals certain apocalyptic characteristics and may be a late addition to the book of Isaiah, may refer to a belief in a resurrection. The divine promise (Is.26 : 19) constitutes the reply to a communal lament over the hopeless condition of the land. The oracle promises God's intervention: the population will be miraculously increased when the dead are brought back to life. Many scholars, however, find in these verses nothing that goes beyond the thought of national resurrection outlined above and are content to link the message of the passage with that of Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones.

18 Dan. 12 : 2, 3.

19 cf. II Mac. 7 : 9, 14, 23, 36.

20 It should be noted that in certain apocryphal books (e.g. Wisdom of Solomon), the writers express a belief in the immortality of the soul and not the resurrection of the body. They believed that the righteous at death, when the soul left the body which they regarded as a prison, went straight to Heaven. This precluded

seeing Sheol as an intermediate state (see Wis. 3 : 1f). This reflects the influence of Greek thought about immortality and the pre-existence of the soul upon Alexandrian Judaism. See also on Greek and Rabbinic doctrines of immortality, Urbach, p.234f.

21 II Mac. 7 : 9, 14, 31, 36; 12 : 43f.

22 e.g. I. Enoch 6 - 36; Test. of Benjamin 10 : 6, 7.

23 e.g. II Esdras 8 : 52; 10 : 26f.

24 e.g. II Esdras 7 : 75.

25 Baruch 2 : 17.

26 On the merit of the patriarchs in Rabbinic thinking, see Urbach, p.504 f.

27 Apoc. of Moses 35 : 2; 36 : 1.

28 Test. of Abraham 14.

29 See above n.12.

30 On this see especially J.H. Hertz, The Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire, revised ed., with commentary, London 1959. On Jewish burial practice see Geoffrey Rowell, The Liturgy of Christian Burial, London 1977, pp. 1 - 8.

31 Hertz, p.269.

32 op.cit., p.270.

33 ibid.

34 op.cit., p.271 cf. A.Z. Idelsohn, Jewish Liturgy and its development, New York 1932, p. 87.

35 ibid.

36 II Baruch 85 : 12.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WITNESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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In trying to analyse the state of the departed in the theology and spirituality of the primitive Church as witnessed to by the canonical writings of the New Testament, one encounters considerable difficulties in interpretation simply because of the manifest lack of relevant material on the subject. For although the interest of the Church in this area of thought naturally entertained a very wide range of topics including the anthropological issues of mortality, the question of life after death and its soteriological categories (eternal salvation or rejection), and subsequently the whole question of the place of the Christian dead in its liturgy, the New Testament itself does not give attention to all of these issues and what is more, displays a singular reticence in the face of questions relating to the state of the departed. Such reticence is to some degree understandable in view of the Church's pagan enviroment and its belief in the proximity of the Parousia - though the possibility that such silence in fact constitutes actual disapproval of speculation in this sphere of inquiry must be given credence.[1]

This point of contention aside, however, the New Testament is, by contrast, plain in its attitude to death. Faith in the victory of Christ gave to the writers of the New Testament a sure confidence in the face of death, and with it, a sure confidence about their relationship with those who had died in the faith. Of itself, this confidence no more removed the many uncertainties which arose when men began to think of the departed and their condition, any more than it solved the theological problems inherent in the practice of prayer for the dead. Indeed, there are enigmas in this field of concern of which Christian minds seem to have been aware since the very first days of the Church![2] Yet if Christian confidence in the face of death did not provide easy solutions to the many problems concerning the departed, it did succeed in setting later thought on the subject on a firm foundation by placing the

entire discussion firmly within the context of the Christian understanding of death and the new life offered to man in Christ. It is necessary, therefore, to examine the New Testament in this perspective, recreating the general shape and thrust of the relevant biblical themes in preference to concentrating on the analysis of certain isolated texts which traditionally may have been thought apodictic of a given set of presuppositions.

1. DEATH AND DYING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Death in the New Testament is understood in its significance for human existence, in relation to man's possibilities and projects over which hangs 'the shadow of death'. Death is not merely an observable happening, a natural phenomenon, but a problem of man's existence. In this respect, the New Testament stands firmly in the tradition of the Old Testament and particularly of the Psalmists, where there was a clear facing of the facts of life and death. In addition to this acceptance of the existential significance of our mortality, one also finds in the New Testament the other side of the picture - fallen man's flight from death, and his avoidance of it in the understanding of his own existence. One recalls Jesus' story of the rich man in this context, who proposed to build larger barns in which to store his expanding possessions but was overtaken in his plans by death.

Thus, the New Testament presents both a call to face death as an issue touching individual existence, and also a condemnation of man's tendency to conceal from himself the ever-present possibility of his own death. To a large extent, this traditional biblical understanding of death is already assumed in the New Testament theology of death and therefore it does not receive the same explicit exposition as is found in the Judaic literature. Indeed, in the New Testament the central issue is not death *per se*, but death when seen in relation to sin and thus, in relation to Jesus Christ. This is where the emphasis lies.

The connection between sin and death was, of course, already familiar from the Old Testament, in which death could be interpreted as a punishment for sin.[3] The New Testament can also think of death in this way. Thus, St.Paul can speak of sinners who are 'worthy of death'[4] in the judgment of God, and

of death as 'the wages of sin.'[5] There is, however, another line of thought in Saint Paul which represents death as the necessary consequence of sin.[6] It is not simply a legal punishment, something added to sin from outside, so to speak. Rather it is conceived as the specific fruit of a life after the flesh, arising necessarily from sin and with sin. Thus Paul can say that 'he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption,'[7] and, 'our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.'[8] These two lines of thought - death as punishment for sin, and death as inherent consequence of sin - are considered by some scholars[9] to be unreconciled in Saint Paul's teaching. But it could be argued that the second is but an interpretation of the first, a deeper insight into the traditional belief that death is the punishment of sin. On this view death is already there as punishment with the sin itself. The punishment is contained in the sin, it is not something externally added.[10]

But whether the two lines of thought are reconciled or not, it seems clear that it was to the second that St. Paul attached the chief importance. Because death is the fruit of sin, it follows that death is, in a sense, already present. Paul can say of sin not only that it has deceived him, but that it has already slain him.[11] In this way, St. Paul and the New Testament as a whole, portrays death as the 'definition of man under the power of sin.'[12] Man in refusing to receive his life as a gift of God has chosen to command his life as if it were his own, and in living for himself alone,[13] he is abandoned to himself and to his own capabilities in which he intends to have life. These potentialities, which seemingly promise him freedom and future prosperity, in fact all turn out in their conclusion to be null and void, for the inevitability of death stamps every would-be autonomous life as death. Thus, death is the signature to the life of sin.[14]

Yet if the New Testament in its understanding of the close relationship between death and sin, is able to portray

death as a cosmic power and the enemy of man,[15] it is also capable of seeing death as the welcomed friend. 'To me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.'[16] In this famous sentence, St. Paul positively welcomes bodily death - not despairingly, but in full expectation of a richer life.[17] He contemplates the prospect of death not as one who has lost the desire to live or as one who no longer appreciates the beauty and joy of life, but rather as one who has come to see in death a gateway to a greater fulness of life that is already rich and full. 'My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.'[18] Death for the apostle means closer communion with Christ and this is the ground of his confidence.

In his second letter to the Corinthian Church, Paul writes in a similar vein.[19] 'We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord ... We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.' (II Cor. 5: 6, 8). Here Paul's language would seem to resemble Platonic thought, death being conceived as an escape, a release from earthly existence.[20] Yet if Paul admits that life in the body does have its disadvantages he does not disparage our present existence. Paul never says, for instance, that in this life the Christian is separated from Christ; he has used too often such expressions as 'in Christ'. He does think, however, of Christ reigning in heaven, and so long as the Christian lives on earth in this age he cannot in the full sense be 'with Christ'[21] as he will be when he departs.[22] Thus, any resemblance of Pauline thought to the Platonic viewpoint is more apparent than it is real. Certainly to imagine that in the writings of Paul one is presented with the juxtaposition of two opposing attitudes to death, the one Judaic, the other Greek, would be a gross simplification of the issue, for it glosses the highly obscure and allusive way in which Paul uses the term θάνατος and furthermore, fails to do justice to the christological grounding of his thought, confusing New Testament dialectic about life and death with theological contradiction.

In view of this misconception and in virtue of the rich diversity of New Testament thought about death, the question of how

these various theological viewpoints are held together in the New Testament presses with some urgency. How is it that death can be seen both as an enemy to be feared and a friend to be longed for? Perhaps the clearest answer to this question was provided by St. Paul when he wrote:

> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.[23]

In these verses one is presented with the distillation of New Testament thought about death for here the various strands find their theological coherence in the person of Jesus Christ and in his redemptive action. According to Paul, the Law, which God intended to be life for mankind, and which was, therefore, essentially spiritual,[24] on encountering sin in mankind, procured not life for man but death in that it pronounced God's just condemnation.[25] In his attempt to manipulate God, man had disclaimed God's claim upon him and rejected His love, and in so doing, had signed his own death-warrant. However, through the mystery of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who was himself the embodiment of God's summons to life,[26] and the goal and fulfilment (τέλος) of the law,[27] a new righteousness was established in which men could participate through faith. Henceforth, man was no longer under law but under grace.[28] The power of sin was, therefore, destroyed, and with it death lost its sting:

> Death is swallowed up in victory.
> O death, where is thy victory?
> O death, where is thy sting?[29]

In Christ, sin and death are vanquished and because of this Paul and the New Testament writers in general, are led to 'understand living and dying in a new way.'[30] Through Jesus' dying the world's history of suffering and death has somehow been taken up into the history of God and has become for man the point of entry to the life of God. To be a believer, therefore, means in some way to be drawn into the dying and resurrection of Jesus and for this reason, all dying must be free from final darkness.[31] Jesus' death makes it

possible for man's dying to be the consummation of life in God.[32] Of course, for Christ's disciples, dying still remains the final and most difficult confirmation and realization of what living in conformity to Christ already demands, that is, not to cling on to one's self and one's life but to surrender it in order to gain it afresh from God. However, because at the centre of the life of faith stands the 'imitation' of Christ, the genuine reality of dying is already an inner factor in true life.[33] This receives expression in the New Testament statements that describe the life of the Christian as dying with Christ. This dying with Christ is not seen as anything negative but rather as a liberation from a life which only seeks itself and for that reason is lacking and is really 'death'.[34] The person who dies with Christ receives his life again as God's gift that is conveyed to him as imposing its own duty and thereby gains a share in the life that persists and is real. And this dying and rising again with Christ constitutes the Christian life from the time of baptism and the decision of faith onwards.[35]

In the perspective thus framed by the theology of the New Testament one can see how for the believer, the biological process of dying becomes only relative simply because in Christ he has already died. Death is no longer an enemy to be feared, although it may appear so in the eyes of the world. But for Paul, 'If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.'[36] 'Neither death nor life ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God.'[37] Obviously, as an immediate and unavoidable encounter with death, the biological process of dying remains still a situation of radical decision. Nevertheless, it remains true that in the New Testament, and in this respect it is normative for the Christian tradition as a whole, the Christian is fundamentally liberated from the kind of dying that as the final consequence of sin is merely meaningless and absurd.[38]

To summarise, it is clear that if anything like a single thread runs through the various statements in the New Testament about death and dying, it is that speaking about dying is very

closely linked with speaking about life. This tension of thought as has been seen, is no theological contrivance but the natural expression of a faith in the crucified and risen Lord; for to the eye of faith the cross represented not defeat but victory, not death but life. Similarly death itself, whilst to the world an enemy and curse, is now capable of being seen as the gateway to the fulfilment of man's existence. Not that dying is interpreted in the New Testament as the goal and horizon of the meaning of life so as to devalue life into a mere preparation for death (ars moriendi); but rather the reverse; life which is all embracing, is seen to include death as an inner factor in itself. This understanding of death inevitably revolutionised contemporary attitudes to death (both Hellenistic and Jewish) but it also resulted (almost incidentally) in the transformation of inherited thought about the state of the departed by placing the entire discussion within a thoroughly positive theological perspective. And it is to this area of thought and to the implications of New Testament attitudes to death that attention will now be directed.

2. THE STATE AND NEEDS OF THE CHRISTIAN DEAD

The New Testament which is 'singularly reticent with regard to the condition of the faithful departed'[39] presents no unambiguous picture of their state and needs. In contrast to the precise chronology of the future life which characterised later Jewish literature and the clear-cut descriptions of the life after death which occur in subsequent Christian thought, the relative silence of the New Testament on the subject is noticeable. Its few brief, pregnant and sometimes picturesque phrases would seem to offer the reader neither detailed nor specifiable information. The exception to this is, of course, the occasional usage in the New Testament of inherited Jewish and Hellenistic 'mythological' imagery in contexts which are concerned with post-mortem existence; though even here it would seem that New Testament usage is highly restrained. With this terminology one is confronted with a formidable problem of interpretation because one has to try to evaluate the extent to which the inherited vocabulary maintains its theological substance in the New Testament and the extent to which it merely forms a didactic framework for new Christian thought. In the case of the gospel narratives, for example, where Jesus himself is recorded as having used such vocabulary, one has to try to establish whether Jesus was merely employing current thought - forms which he knew his hearers would readily understand, presumably in order to teach them some spiritual truth (and yet not in such a way as to assent to the content of the belief the vocabulary enshrined),[40] or whether he actually accepted inherited beliefs about the after-life and, what is more, gave positive dominical authority to certain of the received traditions.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk.16:19-31) is an obvious casein point in this respect. On the one hand, it would seem that v.22-31 are not concerned with the final state but with the state immediately after death,[41] and much of the vocabulary (Abraham's Bosom and Hades) is familiar in this context. It would appear from Jesus' teaching that the souls of the departed

in the intermediate state are possessed of consciousness, memory and sensibility to pain and pleasure and that retribution commences between death and judgement. On the other hand, however, as T.W. Manson[42] and Joachim Jeremias[43] point out, to allow these parabolic details to exercise an authoritative role in Christian thought on the subject would be wrong, especially in view of the fact that the substance of Jesus' parable was, in all probability, drawn from a familiar Egyptian folk-tale which had been popularised in Palestine.[44] In the opinion of Jeremias, "Jesus does not ... intend to give teaching about the after life, but he relates the parable to warn men who resemble the brothers of the rich man of the impending danger."[45] To make parables primary sources or seats of doctrine, in this case for a doctrine of an intermediate state, is theologically indefensible. Of course, one is at liberty to speculate about the personal faith of Jesus on this matter, and in view of his use of traditional belief and popular terminology, both in his teaching and, for example, in his words to the penitent thief on the cross,[46] it would seem at least probable that he did give assent to a belief in some form of existence beyond the grave prior to the general resurrection.[47] The point is, however, largely incidental to the main thrust of the problem.

The question of the evaluation of the place of mythological imagery in the New Testament understanding of the dead receives further exemplification in connection with the interpretation of the tradition of the descent of Christ into Hades; for here, interestingly enough, one is confronted with a belief that 'owes little or nothing to Pagan myths, though the form in which it is expressed is mythical, that is in accordance with current conceptions of the Other World.'[48]

It is now generally agreed that there are several passages in the New Testament which point to the existence of this belief. For the sake of brevity, however, attention will be focused on the Petrine tradition.[49] That most Jews believed in some sort of survival after death has already been noted in the opening chapter of this study. According to their anthropology the dead man entered the realm of the

dead, a 'place', that is to say, if one may express this unimaginable state of survival after death in such terms at all. It has also been noted how the devotional theology of Jesus' own time had developed these ideas and conceived of a wide variation in terms of happiness or woe in the state of life open to man in his survival after death. These were determined, it was held, according to the sort of life which the dead man had lived while still on this earth.[50] Whatever the moral differentiation, though, all the dead were included in a single basic state which is variously designated as Sheol or Hades, the realm of the dead. Thus, when Peter wanted to bring out the fact that Christ had truly died (perhaps in an attempt to combat docetic scepticism), no way was open to him other than asserting Christ's descent into Sheol (Acts 2:22-36).[51]

Once of course it was declared that Christ had in fact descended into Hades prior to his resurrection, speculation about the nature (even purpose) of the descent was in a sense inevitable, and one sees this graphically illustrated in later thought. The First Epistle of Peter which contains two(?) passages which may be taken to refer to the Descent, would seem to envisage Christ preaching in Hades.[52] And if one speaks of preaching[53] then this would seem to presuppose that the dead[54] were/are in a position to 'hear' and presumably to 'repent'. And this in turn suggests the possibility of the application of the power of the Atonement to beyond the grave.[55] However, to speculate in this way is to place too great a strain on the evidence under consideration, and as I have already acknowledged (see notes 52-4) the texts themselves are open to a number of alternative interpretations. Indeed, as a general principal of exegesis it is seen to be unwise to construct theological theories on the evidence of inherited mythological traditions in the New Testament. Apart from anything else, there is always a danger of mistaking the figurative for the literal. Not that one wishes to undervalue the use and importance of figurative/mythological language as a valid expression of the truth. Far from it; to do so would be to ignore the openness and plurality of the possibilities for meaningful discourse, and behind all figurative language (however alien to modern thought) there lies some reality of which it was the appropriate expression.[56]

With regard to the case in hand, it is clear that the presupposition of belief in a descent into Hades (and of all material considered hitherto), was an acknowledgment that above the earth is Heaven, and below the earth is Hades, and that souls of the dead go to the subterranean Hades. This cosmogonic myth of Heaven and Hades was, in fact, in its essence, an objective expression of a belief that there was a future state in which men continued to exist after death. In the words of J.A. MacCulloch:

> There is a striving to express what may have been really true, though mythical in the form in which that truth was expressed. Mythical to us who do not accept the old cosmogony, but not to those who did accept it. The mythical form of a doctrine does not necessarily rob it of essential truth. 57

That the dead are certainly not in a place which lies at the innermost part of our physical earth is obvious in the 20th century. Indeed in terms of modern conceptions of the spatial dimension of the cosmos, the dead are not in a 'place' at all. Sheol/Hades play no part in the frame of reference provided by contemporary physical science! This is not because there is not and never could be any such reality as this realm of the dead, but because the very nature of this state (if one exists) is such that it is seen as belonging to an entirely different dimension from that of this finite world, and as wholly incommensurable with it. But one would fail to do justice to the full depths of meaning contained in the Petrine tradition of the descent if one were to dismiss it as primitive 'mythological' speculation and were to treat it as being devoid of meaning, signifying nothing more concerning the death of Jesus than the actual fact that he died. For over and above this it has something to say about the state of being dead as this applies to him. In fact it is quite clear that it looks beyond the actual process of dying to the fact of being in a state of death. To quote Karl Rahner, Jesus "was not simply the man who died, but over and above this, the man who was in the state of death.'[58]

Thus, if the nature of the material in question precludes any depiction of a picture of the New Testament understanding of the state and needs of the faithful departed (and what is said in this context must be normative for the other material already examined) it does evidence a belief that there is a state of 'being dead'. Indeed the

eschatological perspective of the New Testament as a whole, in that it establishes a succession of stages in the 'end events', would similarly seem to imply (at least in principle) the possibility of a form of existence between death and the resurrection of the dead. Quite what the implications for this state of having died and being dead are, cannot be deduced with any certainty from the New Testament's usage of traditional 'mythological' language. In view of this, one must seek some further dimension of meaning by drawing out the theological implications from propositions about death and life after death which are acceptable on other grounds.

In general, it may be said that the New Testament presents two 'models' or pictures of the Christian dead,[59] much in the same way as it offers two views of death itself. In themselves these two pictures would seem to be difficult to harmonize, one being characterised by the confident note of their being 'in Christ' and (perhaps more significantly) 'with Christ';[60] and the other which can occur within the same passage of Scripture, speaks the language of sleep and waiting, and invariably talks of a resurrection at the Last Day.[61] This apparent inconsistency may in part be a product of the exigencies of having to speak sometimes with the individual in the forefront of one's thought, and sometimes with the whole people of God in view and the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation.[62]

For example, with regard to the vocabulary of sleep it is clear that whilst such an image 'speaks to us at a number of levels,'[63] as a Christian term it is perhaps particularly expressive of the co-inherence of the faithful in Christ, in that it declares that no Christian is raised on his own but that all must wait until the time is ripe, so that all can be raised together. Such an understanding of the function of 'waiting' language would seem to be supported by passages such as Heb.11:39f and Rev.6:9f, and moreover enjoys a particular currency in relation to the exegesis of I Thes.4:13f., where Paul is Concerned to meet the problem of death in the Christian community. From the tone of the epistle, which is the oldest dateable document in the New Testament, there does not seem to have been any undue astonishment that death should have occurred among the brethren; rather it would appear that the Thessalonian Christians were concerned that the faithful departed might be at a disadvantage in the day when the Lord returned. Paul's concern in this context was thus pre-eminently pastoral[64] and to this end he comforted his readers by

stating that their dead brethren would rise again in time to take part with those who had remained alive in the Lord's last coming.[65] And it is to be noted in passing that at this early stage Paul seems to have imagined that he himself would be of the number who would live to see the imminent return of the Lord.[66] In all this the 'collective' orientation of Paul's thought is clear, and in keeping with other New Testament writers, his employment of the language of waiting, of sleeping, of interval, would seem to be an appropriate expression of his belief that God has a collective ultimate plan of salvation.

To this extent there is considerable agreement among scholars. It is only when one comes to consider what such a functional analysis of the New Testament language implies about the actual state of the departed (if anything) that opinion is divided. For it should be apparent that to talk about 'sleep' and 'waiting' in terms of the 'coinherence of the Communion of Saints'[67] does not necessarily absolve one from facing the further question whether or not Paul understands in his use of this model some sort of intermediate state between death and the Parousia. On this question there is little agreement.

On the one hand many scholars utterly reject the notion that the term 'sleep' could in any way represent a designation of an intermediate state, retaining a purely functional approach to New Testament language at this point. Other exegetes, arguing on semantic grounds similarly contend that not only is there no intimation of an intermediate state but the term 'sleep' itself has nothing even biblical about it, let alone specifically Christian, 'sleep' being a widespread metaphor for death,[68] and one well known in the ancient world both to pagans and Jews. (It was certainly used in Greek circles as a euphemism for death from at least the time of Homer onwards - presumably derived from the fact that sleep provides the nearest parallel in experience to what men look like when they are dead.) 'Sleep' on this understanding, therefore, is seen as no more than a common synonym for death.[69] Indeed it is perhaps significant in this respect that the New English Bible translates κοιμηθέντας in I Thes.4:14 simply as 'those who have died'.

Such an interpretation which would clearly seem to go against much of what has just been said concerning the relation of the metaphor of 'sleep' to other 'waiting' language, and to the idea of the 'coinherence of the Communion of Saints', and even against what has been said previously concerning the New Testament use of 'mythological' language,

may, however, be a little too simplistic. It is correct in the sense that, regardless of background,[70] the mere fact that the term 'sleep' is used in contexts where there is no belief in any kind of after-life means that the term cannot originate from the idea of a body left behind when the soul goes off to a continued life elsewhere or from the idea that the 'sleeping' person will afterwards wake up to a new life. Certainly Paul does not deduce these ideas from the metaphor and one should not therefore think of the awakening at the parousia of those who sleep[71] or of the conception of an intermediate state, as being implicit in the use of the term. However, when all this is said, it should not be forgotten that knowledge of Christ's resurrection and resurrecting power must have radically transformed the inherited image of death as an endless sleep or rest.[72] In the Gospels, Christ can assure the bystanders that Jairus's daughter is not dead but merely asleep[73] and that Lazarus' sleep is not death but rest.[74] Lazarus and Jairus' daughter thus become images of those who sleep in Jesus, awaiting the call to life.[75]

In view of this and the very ambiguity that surrounds the term 'sleep' one should perhaps be more cautious about dismissing the term as a mere synonym for death and nothing more. Indeed, some scholars, as has already been intimated, would want to contend that in fact 'sleep' designates not simply death but the <u>state</u> of being dead.[76] This interpretation, certainly as seen in the context of I Thes.4., would seem to be valid. If however, 'designation' were to become equated with 'description', so that what is in fact only an analogy comes to be seen as equivalent to a literal description, then one would want to question the validity of the exegesis.[77] As M.C.Perry has pointed out:

> The value of an analogy is that it helps us understand what we do not know by pointing out similarities to the things that we do know. Its danger comes when we mistake an analogy for a literal description and push it to its breaking-point.[78]

Thus if any conclusion is to be made either about Paul's understanding of the term 'sleep', or more generally, the function and meaning of 'waiting' language in the New Testament, then it would be that the New Testament writers are employing familiar vocabulary in familiar ways. They do this, not with the purpose of giving information about the life after death but in order to teach that no Christian is ever outside the power and love of God, regardless of whether he be 'dead' or 'alive'[79] for all are part of the wider eternal purpose of God for mankind

yet to be consummated. If an intermediate state is designated, there is certainly no intention to describe it.[80] The fact that the language of sleep is somewhat masked in ambiguity precludes the formation of a more confident conclusion. The language of the Christian dead being 'in Christ' and 'with Christ', which constitutes the second main strand of New Testament language about the faithful departed would, however, seem to offer a clearer proposition, directed as it is to the individual in the first instance, and to the individual's relationship with Christ after death.

As has already been noted in connection with the New Testament understanding of death and dying, the life, death and resurrection of Christ generated a complete reappraisal of the meaning of death, with the formation of a new, positive, theological perspective in which death could become for the believer (at least potentially) the gateway to a greater fulness of life and joy.[81] Thus Paul could say with quiet confidence that his desire was 'to depart and to be with Christ for that is far better.'[82] Death for the Apostle meant closer communion with Christ and this constituted the ground of his confidence.

It would appear from this and from the similar way in which he talks to the Corinthian Church[83] that Paul was not thinking of a distant heavenly bliss but of a condition which follows immediately upon death. Now unless one is to hold that Paul's conception of the fulfilment of the Christian's hope of blessedness had radically changed by the time that he wrote these words so that he no longer believed that perfect consummation and bliss was only achieved at the Parousia, then one can hardly fail to find in these utterances 'some intimation of an intermediate state.'[84] Indeed, it is apparent from all Paul's various writings and especially from the contexts of the two passages under discussion, that the apostle was constant in his belief that for all, living and dead alike, it will only be the coming of Christ in glory that will give final meaning to their existence. If there is a tension in his thought then, as has already been intimated, it is one that exists between salvation understood as a corporate experience and as something to be viewed from within the perspective of the individual, and is consequently perhaps more a matter of changing emphasis than theological development.[85] For it would appear that as time advanced Paul found that he must take with increasing seriousness the probability of his own death before the

Parousia and in so doing he also took with increasing seriousness the sense in which even the dead are with the Lord.

Indeed, Paul characterises the state into which he is about to enter as one 'with Christ' (σὺν Χριστῷ).[86] For the apostle, such a description is all-sufficient. He does not attempt to suggest in any other way how he envisages it except, that is, for his assurance that it is 'far better'[87] than his present earth-bound existence.[88] It is not the final beatitude of knowing 'as he is known,' of 'seeing face to face,'[89] of being 'transformed wholly into the likeness of Christ'; for that he must await the coming of the Lord from heaven;[90] it is rather an intermediate state, less than ultimate perfection. For as Paul makes clear in his epistle to the Romans, our filial relation to God in Christ is to be attained only in 'the redemption of the body.'[91] Thus, in spite of the deliverance from the burden of the flesh that it brings and, of course, the deepening of communion with Christ - for each believer's relation to Christ is direct and immediate - the state into which the Christian enters at death will, nevertheless, still be one of expectation,[92] of waiting in growing anticipation for the glory that is to be revealed.[93] And for Paul, as has been noted, this final salvation was no distant event - 'The Lord is at hand.'[94] He has no thought of the long perspective of history. This is why he has no real concern with the intermediate state, for to him it will endure only briefly until with the Parousia of the Lord death is swallowed up in victory[95] and God is all in all.[96] And it is precisely on this ground, where the whole relation of New Testament eschatology to the notion of an intermediate state comes to the fore, that a complex of questions has been raised, whose problematical character must not be overlooked.

At first sight the eschatology of the New Testament seems to present itself as a chronological scheme - a programme of divine activity portrayed as happening in a 'horizontal' or historical context, even though more than one level of existence may be involved. The Parousia of Jesus Christ, the gathering together of His elect, the judgment of the entire human race with

consequent reward and punishment, and the end of the natural order, are conceived as following one another in sequence. (This 'chronological' scheme is seen par excellence in the Johannine Apocalypse.) But even as one speaks of such a scheme as a first approximation, it should be evident that it does not provide a complete framework for the eschatology of the New Testament. For the consummation which is finally expected has already been in some way anticipated by Christ and in some measure anticipated also in the Christian's condition in Christ in the here and now. Christians are already 'seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus'[97] even if this heavenly state is also a hidden one.[98] On this basis, Althaus, in consistent pursuit of his time-eternity metaphysic, adopts a very critical attitude towards the notion of an intermediate state in the New Testament, arguing that one should refrain from

> ordering the two elements of hope, the world beyond death and the last day, in an objective succession ... Is time as we know it not everywhere bordered by, and stranded upon, the last day? Does the last day not as it were lie all around us, so that for all of us our dying makes us contemporaneous with the end of history, with the coming of the kingdom, with the judgement?[99]

Thus he can argue on these terms that any notion of an intermediate state would accordingly make the resurrection of the dead empty of meaning and a matter of indifference:

> 'Before' the resurrection we know nothing save death, and that the dead are in God's hand. That is enough.[100]

In the face of this argument it is important to ask what it is that determines Althaus' judgment? In his concern to emphasise the diversity of perspective in New Testament eschatology, he rightly draws attention to the element of realized eschatology; but one wonders whether in his criticism of the concept of the intermediate state his criterion of judgement emanates not from the genuine plurality of biblical insights but from the logical principles of philosophy and his metaphysic of

timelessness. This is certainly the opinion of Künneth who in reply to Althaus asserts that

> it is not with a flawless ordering of events in an 'objective' succession that we have here to do, but with the recognition in principle of a series of stages. And wherever theology is resolved to teach a world development and world perfection according to God's eschatological plan, there the 'intermediate state' also finds a necessary place.[101]

Helmut Thielicke has similarly taken a critical attitude to the problems of the 'intermediate state' in question here, though he exercises caution in his judgement unlike Althaus. He launches his attack on anthropological grounds rather than eschatological. Thielicke, in accordance with the biblical perspective, lays great emphasis upon the idea of the total dying of man as a whole person, in which there can be no dividing of man into body and soul. As Richard Kingsbury has pointed out in another context, 'the resurrection presupposes the death of the whole man, every part of him.'[102] If this view is taken to its conclusion, then as Thielicke points out, logic demands the exclusion of the possibility of an 'intermediate state'. For if one assumes the complete extinction of the psychosomatic ego in death, then dying can logically be followed only by the resurrection as a creatio ex nihilo without an 'intermediate station'.[103]

However, in the face of this logic, it may be questioned whether the theological roundness of the argument does justice to the richness of biblical insights. And Thielicke himself had misgivings in this respect. While asserting that there were no central statements on the subject of the intermediate state in the New Testament (as has been seen), Thielicke was forced to admit that there was a relatively frequent recurrence of statements which envisaged the 'time' before the resurrection of the dead as something

> in the nature of being at home with Christ, and converseley also being far from him, which must be acknowledged.[104]

Thus, Thielicke's position, unlike that of Althaus, definitely leaves the possibility of an intermediate state in the

New Testament theologically open, however reserved his judgment!

In the light of the criticisms of Althaus and Thielicke, which are admittedly only two examples of contemporary critique on the subject, what can be said of the New Testament's understanding of the state into which Christians pass on death? For regardless of labels, there is no escaping the fact that St.Paul, for example, does characterise the 'state' after death as one 'with Christ', even if he elsewhere describes it in terms of 'waiting' and 'sleep', and perhaps even of 'nakedness' - whatever he means by the term.[105]

Paul himself, as has already been noted, in no way delineates his thought in this field. His thought defeats close systematisation and certainly prevents the adoption of any easy solution to the complex of eschatological and anthropological questions to which it gives rise. Indeed to press the apostle's thinking into a systematic mould might be to destroy a valid theological tension[106] in a region where agnosticism is in any case 'assuredly the better part of wisdom.'[107] One should perhaps, just accept the fact that the New Testament uses different (and strictly incompatible) models in its discourse about post-mortem existence for different aspects of the truth, and therefore the presence of unresolved (and unresolvable?) questions is inevitable. Yet if this be admitted, it is still the case that the New Testament in the development of its eschatological perspective and in its supreme confidence in the face of death, would seem to demand in spite of all academic caution and contrary to all critical objections, the acceptance of certain positive theological assertions about the state after death; not in such a way as to exempt the Christian from looking forward to the final resurrection of the body as the definitive redemption of the whole human being in company with the rest of creation, but rather in such a manner as to enable him to conceive in the interval an already essential possession of heavenly life because it is union with Christ (σὺν Χριστῷ), who even now possesses this life to the full.

In this context, to quote Künneth, the true meaning of the intermediate state comes to be seen in its

> being a partial preconsummation, an intermediate and preliminary stage towards the coming total perfection. As a stage of 'being in between' it has the character of 'waiting'. Waiting characterises the whole basic situation of man after the Fall;[108] human existence

> becomes a waiting for redemption, for consummation. The real meaning of this waiting, however, is grounded in the resurrection of Jesus.[109] Without this, 'waiting' would be without hope, a permanent torture, a mere waiting for judgement.[110] When related to the Risen One, however, there is a hopeful, blessed and joyful waiting.[111] The waiting of the 'intermediate state is anticipatory joy, and as such certainly true joy, but not yet the joy that is finally fulfilled and perfected for all who fall asleep in faith in Christ.[112]

In addition, one would probably be justified in concluding from this that the state after death for the unbelieving (though this is not something with which we are directly concerned) would be the direct antithesis of the peace and rest which the faithful departed enjoy, inasmuch as their waiting would be painful and distressing, because of the mystery of God's imminent judgement.[113]

In conclusion, it may be said that despite any theological assertions of a philosophical or logical kind to the contrary, the New Testament, both in its eschatological perspective and in its theology of death, posits the existence of an 'intermediate state' for those who die in the faith of Christ, and moreover, by implication, gives positive theological characterisation to such a state. Yet, within this atmosphere of confident expectation, the New Testament makes no attempt to spell out unambiguously the needs of the faithful departed and is content with a discretionary silence. This ambiguity is of such a nature as to allow considerable room for manoeuvre but it inevitably fosters the precipitation of innumerable questions to which no satisfactory answers can be supplied. Nevertheless, the New Testament corpus of writings would appear to be 'unanimous in its fundamental conviction that death does not yet bring the final solution, the state after death being only an intermediate solution which points beyond itself to the final state which is to come.'[114]

With this understanding in mind, consideration will now be given to the question of prayer for the Christian dead as evidenced in the New Testament.

3. PRAYER FOR THE DEPARTED

In view of the Church's supreme confidence in the face of death, her living hope of a resurrection, her fuller understanding of the condition of the dead, and her strong sense of corporate union with departed members of Christ, one might expect the Christian community to have commemorated her dead from the very first. Yet this does not seem to have been the case. The New Testament is virtually silent on the subject and the first century as a whole has scarcely any evidence to offer for the existence of the practice in the primitive church. The silence of the New Testament is all the more remarkable when seen against its historical background for, as has already been observed, the custom of offering prayers for the departed was not uncommon among the Jews of the time and was certainly sanctioned in pharisaic circles.[115]

There is but one generally-acknowledged passage in the New Testament which could be construed as a prayer for the dead, and that occurs in the Pastoral Epistles (II Tim.1:16 ff.):

> May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me - may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day - and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

Inevitably the interpretation of this passage pivots on the question whether Onesiphorus was still alive at the time the letter was written and this is by no means clear from the epistle.[116] Even if he were dead though, one notes that the prayer in question is an exceeedingly general one, containing only a commendation of the dead man to the divine mercy, and perhaps amounting to no more than a 'pious wish'.[117] In view of this ambiguity it would be unwise to build too much on this one text. There is certainly no explicit or certain example of prayer for the dead here or anywhere in the New Testament for that matter. Other passages which have in the past been cited as having relevance to the practice of praying for the dead (eg., Lk.16:19-31, I Cor.15:29, Rev.6:9ff.) are mostly tangental and at best speak to us only indirectly.[118]

In view of the fact that the New Testament gives no clear injunction to pray for the dead, should its silence be understood as meaning that its drift (which is the decisive issue) is against the legitimacy of the practice? When the Bible is so full of injunctions to pray for the living,[119] is it not of high significance that one is nowhere unequivocally told to pray for the departed? Here again opinions divide.

On one reading of the evidence, the argument from silence is all but conclusive. As has already been noted, the New Testament Church was no stranger to the problem of death in relation to its expectation of an imminent parousia. The contention is that in several New Testament contexts where this problem of Christians dying before the parousia is tackled, a call to pray for the departed would be so natural that its absence is tantamount to proof that no such practice was known in apostolic times. For example, the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews are told to remember their dead leaders, to follow their example, and to be conscious of their fellowship (Heb.13:17;12:1), but not to pray for them. Similarly Paul when writing to the Thessalonian Christians who were obviously deeply concerned about the lot of their loved ones who had died, nowhere suggests prayer for them, but rather stresses Christ's care for both the living and the dead together. He assures the Thessalonians much in the same way that he later assures the Roman church, that death cannot separate one from the Lord, and envisages a joyful resurrection with Christ at the parousia when living and dead will be re-united. (I Thes.4:13-18). This would surely have been an ideal place to mention and urge prayer for the dead, had Paul believed this was a proper way to comfort the living and aid the departed; but he is silent.[120]

However, another school of thought differently assesses the argument from silence. According to A.J. Mason, for example, the absence of prayers for the departed in the New Testament

> is to be explained by the expectation of Christ's imminent return, which drew away attention from the brief waiting of the faithful dead; partly also by the joyful certainty of a glorious issue which the Lord's resurrection had newly shed over the waiting state. [121]

Certainly the New Testament would seem not to offer or imply any disapproval of such prayers, and one cannot help but conclude from an analysis of the Pauline literature that Paul had not lived long enough with the theological problem of the departed in Christ to be able to articulate a solution of it.[122] The New Testament, it could therefore be argued, represents a period in the evolution of Christian theology when thought about the dead and our relation to them was still embryonic. The theology of the one body of Christ, in which the faithful living and dead are united - the theology, so it would be argued, of which prayer for the Christian dead is a proper expression - is indeed fully presented in the New Testament, but this particular corollary of it was left for the church of later times to develop. In the words of A.T. Hanson:

> It has been rightly claimed that, except in modern Protestantism, prayer for the dead, inherited from Judaism, has been a univeral Christian custom. The practice does not require specific scriptural warrant ... It is surely a necessary corollary of the doctrine of the communion of saints. [123]

The New Testament evidence bearing on the practice of prayers for the Christian dead has thus received differing interpretations. The interpretation of the evidence, as has been seen, depends not simply on the exegesis of particular texts but also on the assessment of the silences of the New Testament and the possible extension to the departed of positive theological principles, for example, the doctrine of the communion of saints. In this respect the wider theological context in which the evidence is placed is of almost equal importance. For it could be argued with considerable credibility, that it is the very confidence of the New Testament writers that the living and dead are united in Christ which provides the basis for the practice of prayer on their behalf which is attested in the second century. The situation, however, remains inconclusive.

By way of conclusion, it may be said that examination of the witness of the New Testament with regard to death, the state and needs of the Christian dead and the question of prayer for the departed, has indicated both the certainties and the ambiguities of primitive Christian thought on the subject. On the one hand it is clear that faith in the victory of Christ gave to the Apostolic Church a sure confidence in the face of death and a sure confidence about their relationship with the departed in Christ. On the other hand, questions relating to the state of the dead prior to the parousia would seem to be clothed in obscurity. However, within this area of uncertainty, positive avenues of thought were already beginning to differentiate. These avenues of thought, although indecisive in themselves, nevertheless provide a theological groundwork for an evaluation of subsequent thought on the subject and necessary delimitations for the varied speculation of later generations. More immediately, however, they indicate the thrust of the developing theology and spirituality of the Christian community and the way in which thought about the nature and purpose of post-mortem existence could evolve in the Early Church. The beginnings of such a development are already reflected in the writings of the sub-apostolic era. It is, therefore, to this period that consideration will now be given.

CHAPTER 2

FOOTNOTES

1 The bearing of Scripture in this matter will be discussed later.

2 witness I Thes. 4.

3 e.g., Gen. 3:19.

4 Rom. 1:32.

5 Rom. 6:23 see also: I Cor. 5:5; 11:30. cf. I John 3:14.

6 see Rom. 5:12.

7 Gal. 6:8.

8 Rom. 7:5.

9 e.g., Bultmann (Theology of the New Testament, vol. 1. London, 1952. p.246 ff).

10 So Dante in his description of hell interprets the specific punishment of each sin as nothing other than the disintegration of personality which arises out of the sin itself. (Inferno, cantos V,XXIII).

11 Rom. 7:11.

12 Gilbert Greshake, 'Towards a Theology of Dying', Concilium, vol.4. No: 10. 1974. p.88; see introduction in this context.

It should be noted that for the Christian it is no mere metaphor to say that in the life of sin death is already present as the consequence - or rather, the concomitant - of sin, since both sin and death are characterized ontologically by loss of being. In his 'trespasses and sins' (Eph.2:1) man is already in a condition of death insofar as he has sustained a loss of being. See also note 14.

For an analysis of an existantial exposition of the New Testament doctrine in this matter, as proposed by Heidegger and Bultmann, see J. Macquarrie, An Existentialist Theology, London 1955. p.123 ff.

13 II Cor. 5:15.

14 These last few lines are a rough paraphrase of Emil Brunner, who when writing on the inter-relation of sin and death in the New Testament perspective, says: 'Because I know myself before God to be a sinner, therefore, I discover something new about the

character of my death: that it is the wages of sin. For what is sin? It is the revolt of the human 'I' against its creator, the rebellion of the dependent one who deems that he must and can win his freedom ... Sin cleaves to man, it is reckoned to him as guilt. The guilt of sin separates him from God and robs man of the life which lay ready for him in God. For God Himself is Life; whosoever is separated from him is cut off from the sources of life. For this reason death is not something which does not take place until the end of life. Rather, death is the signature of this so-called life. (Emil Brunner, Eternal Hope, London, 1954. p.102).

15 Rom. 8:38, 39. I Cor. 15:26.

16 Phil. 1:21. For a detailed exegesis of this passage see: F.W. Beare, The Epistle to the Philippians, London 1959. pp. 62 - 65 and other commentaries.

17 F.S. Thornton has commented on Phil. 1:21, 23: 'This utterance stands out as a classic statement of faith with regard to the Christian attitude towards death. It consists of two sentences, in each of which death seems to be regarded as the gateway into a fuller form of the life in Christ.' (F.S. Thornton, Christ and the Church, London, 1956. p.137.)

18 Phil. 1:23.

19 II Cor. 5:1-10.

For a detailed exegesis see C.K. Barrett, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, London, 1973, pp. 157 - 160; W.L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, London 1939. p.140f, and commentaries.

20 C.F.D. Moule comments in this context: 'We seem to be extremely near to a doctrine of the escape of the soul from the shackles of the body.' (C.F.D. Moule, 'St. Paul and Dualism : The Pauline Conception of Resurrection', New Testament Studies, 1965-66, vol.12. p.121).

21 cf. Phil. 1:23. This is Paul's characteristic use of 'with Christ', according to C.K. Barrett. see C.K. Barrett, op.cit., p.158.

22 Throughout Paul's various writings he is constant in his belief that for all, living and dead alike, it will only be the coming of Christ that will give final meaning to their existence. There is little sign of development in Paul's thought on this subject beyond the fact that as time advanced he found that he must take with increasing seriousness the possibility of his own death, and in doing so took also with increasing seriousness the sense in which even the dead are with the Lord.
Time prevents an examination of the implications of a theory of a development in Pauline Eschatology as proposed, for example, by C.H. Dodd. For a discussion of this see D.E.H. Whiteley, The Theology of Saint Paul, Oxford, 1972, pp. 241 - 248.

23 I Cor. 15:56, 57.

24 Rom. 7:12, 14.

25 Rom. 7:10.

26 This is particularly evident in the Gospels, where the man who ignores this summons to life already belongs among the dead (Lk.9:60) for in a man's rejection of Jesus, he disclaims the gift of eternal life. And it is this loss of faith that finally destroys the human person.
Emil Brunner has forcefully brought out the significance of the Biblical understanding of the creative summons in relation to the Greek doctrine of immortality:-
'Not in the way we are made but in God's creative summons have we our eternal life, which has not ceased to bear witness to itself, even in our sinful mortal mode of existence. Our eternal life is rooted in the 'thou' of God who addresses us, not in the 'I' which we speak to ourselves. But the philosophical belief in immortality is false ... because it does not take into account the real loss of this original destiny through sin ... In spite of sin, man does not cease to be a person and to know that he is such, but as a sinner he cannot help falsely interpreting his personal existence. So we may never say that the doctrine of immortality is completely wrong, but what is true in it can only be appreciated in the light of Christ, at the point where it is also unmistakenably told of what is false in it.'
(Emil Brunner, op. cit., p.107).

27 Rom. 10:4.

28 Rom. 5:17; 6:14.

29 I Cor. 15:54, 55.

30 C.K. Barrett, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, London 1973. p. 47. Commenting on I Cor. 15: 57, C.K. Barrett writes:
'The victory of Jesus Christ was a victory over sin in that he died to sin, a death which men are summoned to share (Rom. 6:10f), so that the sting of death is now, in Christ, drawn; and it was a victory over death, in that Christ himself was raised from the dead, and raised as the first-fruits - the pledge that all who are in him will also be raised (I Cor. 15:20, 23). The victory is not fully won, for mankind as a whole, until the End (I Cor. 15:26), but it is so certain that Paul can speak of it in the present tense; who gives us the victory.'
(The First Epistle to the Corinthians, London, 1968. p.384).

31 Rom. 6:4.

32 Phil. 1:21, 23. G.B. Caird has written, 'Eternal life is not the sequel to bodily death, nor is it a matter of endless duration, a prospect which most people in any case have found daunting. It is a quality of existence derived from communion with God, from the fact that Jesus is in the Father and the Father in him.' G.B. Caird, 'The Christological Basis of Christian Hope' in The Christian Hope, edited by I.T. Ramsey, London 1970. p.15.

33 Mk. 10:29 ff. and parallels.

34 Macquarrie commenting on the New Testament dialectic about life and death writes this of Pauline theology: 'Sometimes Saint Paul has a way of speaking very paradoxically of the Christian life itself as a death in one of its aspects - the Christian is dead to sin. (Rom 6:2). The meaning is plain enough. The Christian has withdrawn from the life after the flesh, he has lost his sinful being, therefore he is dead to sin. The paradox arises from the fact that what the Christian has lost was itself a loss, that to which he has died was itself death.' Macquarrie, op.cit., p.125.

35 See Rom. 6:2 ff, 8:36; I Cor. 15:31; II Cor. 4:7 ff, 6:9; Gal. 6:17; Jn. 5:24, 11:25ff; I Jn.3:14.
Faith in Jesus Christ is already the beginning of a new and risen life in that it marks the judgment on one's life and so implies an actual dying, even though not a dying in a biological sense. To believe means objectively to die; that is to die to that false ego which is identical with sin. Likewise, to believe means objectively to rise again as the new man with Christ. This fact inevitably leads to an understanding of eternal life not simply as a future expectation, but as a present reality. It is interesting to note in this context that the Greek word used in the New Testament for 'life' is not βίος , the usual Greek word for man's life on earth, which can be long or short, happy or miserable, but ζωή ; and ζωή corresponds to an Aramaic usage which referred to life not in quantitative terms but in qualitative terms. (E.G. Selwyn, 'The Life After Death', Theology, lvi (1953) p.169.) This meaning is enhanced in the New Testament by the frequent addition of the adjective αἰώνιος , translated 'eternal' or everlasting, thus denoting something which transcends all human measurement and is without beginning or end. Moreover this eternal life which is properly attributed only to God himself (in contrast to Greek thought) consists in man's case in a relationship, (see above note 32). For example, according to John's Gospel, 'This is eternal life that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' (Jn.17:3). Here eternal life is clearly differentiated from Platonic thought in not being part of man's natural endowment, but rather something imparted to him by God himself who also through the Holy Spirit prompts the faith which receives it.

36 Rom. 14:8.

37 Rom. 8:38,39.

38 To quote Jüngel, the Christian when undergoing death as the biological frontier of life, is 'passive in another way than in undergoing death that has been incurred as a curse in consequence of his own actions. In this kind of death, the kind that is experienced as a curse, man is the subject of an activity that he must then undergo passively. But the conclusion of life that is freed from death as a curse is undergone by man in a passivity that is dependent on the activity of the creator. This kind of passivity cannot be an evil.' (Death : The Riddle and the Mystery, Philadelphia 1975). See also on this subject: Ladislaus Boros, The Moment of Truth, London 1965; Gilbert Greshake, 'Towards a Theology of Dying', Concilium, 4 (1974), pp.80-98; Karl Rahner, On the Theology of Death, London 1961.

39 E.G.Selwyn, 'The Life After Death', Theology lvi (1953) p.18.

40 'Our Lord constantly made use of current beliefs in current language without necessarily adopting these as literally true.' (J.A.MacCulloch, The Harrowing of Hell, Edinburgh 1930 p.317).

41 Jeremias has argued that the New Testament 'draws a sharp distinction between the intermediate state of ᾅδης and the final state of γέεννα.' (The Parables of Jesus, London 1954 p.185)

42 T.W.Manson, The Sayings of Jesus, London 1949. pp.296-301.

43 Jeremias, op.cit., p.186/7.

44 For the origin of the parable see Jeremias, p.183.

45 ibid., p.186.

46 Lk.23:43 On the meaning of'paradise' see chapter 1. p.20.

47 Jn14:2 has been interpreted as a reference to a progression in the after-life where μονή is translated as 'stopping-place' or 'station'. This is, however, very unlikely. See C.K.Barrett, The Gospel according to St.John, London 1955. p.381.

48 J.A.MacCulloch, op.cit., p.45. see also p.286.

49 Acts 2:22-36; I Pet.3:18f., 4:6.

I am assuming here that the same authority lies behind both Peter's speeches recorded in Acts and the Epistle under his name.

There are other relevant passages:

eg. Eph.4:9 εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς

While some commentators take 'the lower parts of the earth' as implying simply this earth to which the pre-existent Christ

descended from Heaven, and connect it with the Incarnation, the nature of the formula seems to imply more than this, namely, beneath the earth, Hades, the abyss of Rom.10:7. Christ descended there, and then ascended 'far above all heavens' (the opposite of the lower parts of the earth') that 'He might fill all things.' Thus no part of the universe - Hades, Earth, Heaven - was to be unvisited by Him.

e.g. Rev. 1:18

The writer of the Revelation would also seem to know of the the place of the departed, since he puts into the mouth of Christ the words: 'I am he that lives and yet was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of Hades and of Death.' (Rev.1:18). As his Resurrection proves, Christ, though he died and was one of the dead in Hades, could not be held by Death or Hades; thus He is superior to them, and thus, possessing their keys, can open the doors of the underworld to the faithful souls there.

50 It has been seen how this theology of the after-life is reflected in the parable of Dives and Lazarus

51 As has already been noted, the current popular Jewish doctrine of the life after death was probably represented by the parable of Dives and Lazarus. All souls passed to an intermediate state, or place of waiting, called Hades (Sheol) in which there were two divisions - one for the righteous (Abraham's Bosom) and one for the wicked. This view prevailed in the Palestinian schools as opposed to that which emanated from the schools at Alexandrian Judaism, namely, that at death all entered into their permanent state - heaven or hell. It would seem logically probable, therefore, as MacCulloch points out, that: 'the disciples must have believed that the soul of Christ, between his death and resurrection, was in the intermediate state, Sheol or Hades, whether in the better part of it, or more vaguely within its bounds. This was the fate of all souls. Could it be otherwise with the soul of Christ?' (J.A. MacCulloch, op.cit., p.313)

However, in popular thought, the soul of a dead man still remained with the body until the 7th day (9th? and other durations) before departing to Hades (Sheol). Thus it could also be contended that the resurrection of Jesus was in fact a fraud - it was only a resuscitation! Thus, in order (perhaps) to counter such thoughts, though it may have flowed out of normal thought about the intermediate state (see Mt.12:40), it is possible that Peter (and the early Church generally) were concerned to assert the real death of Jesus and the real resurrection of Jesus (see Jn.19:34). In accordance with this, Peter declares that Jesus died, and was in a state of being dead - for his soul descended into Hades.

52 I Peter 3:18f : 4:6. These passages are, however, enigmatic - especially the first. Many modern commentators, for example, no longer interpret the former text with reference to the departed but instead relate it to the 'fallen angels' (cf. Gen.6:1f). In

this case the two texts should be dissociated. Not that this is a peculiarly modern development in exegesis. St.Augustine, for example, thought the Petrine passages contained no reference to Hades, and in this he was followed by later commentators, eg. Aquinas (Summa Theologica iii. 52;2). Augustine supposed that the words, 'in which...he preached...in the days of Noah' meant that the pre-existent Christ came in the Spirit, as he often did to comfort or rebuke, speaking by suitable manifestations of himself. In the Spirit he came and preached to the disobedient before the flood. The spirits are said to be in 'prison' because they were in the darkness of ignorance while yet in the bodies of men. Christ's Spirit was 'quickened' because, by the operation of the Spirit in which he was wont to come and preach in bygone days, his flesh was quickened and rose again from the dead. (Augustine, Ep.clxiv.15f) Luther, however, interpreted the tradition differently (see below note 53). He saw the 'descent' as the crucified Jesus' agony of conscience, the mental anguish which the proclaimer of the nearness of God must have experienced, knowing himself bound in conscience by that God, to the authority of the Jewish tradition from which he had now been excluded. For other interpretations see commentaries and : J.A.MacCulloch, op.cit., c.5; Pannenberg, The Apostles' Creed in the Light of Today's Questions, London 1972, pp.90-5.

53 Even the content of 'preaching' is disputed. Luther, for example, takes the 'spirits in prison' to be the spirits of Jews and Gentiles still living on earth, to whom the apostles, inspired by the Spirit, preach in vain. They are disobedient like those of Noah's day (Luther, Works li. 458f. Weimar ed.)
However, to make ἐκήρυξεν to mean an announcement of condemnation is strained and negated by the fact that κηρύσσειν never has this meaning in the New Testament. It almost invariably refers to a preaching of the Kingdom of God, of the Gospel, of repentance. Even if the preaching of the Kingdom implies the eschatological thought of Judgment, this is only part of the message - the stress being more on good news.

54 Who are the dead (νεκροί) in I Pet.4:6 ?

1. It has been suggested that it refers to those now dead but to whom the Gospel had been preached while they were in life. These are either Christians who died before the expected Parousia, or all alike, those who had received, those who had rejected, the Gospel.
2. The νεκροί are those 'dead in trespasses and sins' -i.e., those who are spiritually dead or simply the Gentiles. Thus the Gospel had been preached to those who were spiritually dead that when they believed they might be judged accordingly ~~to men in the flesh~~.

However, it is better to take νεκροί in the literal sense:

3. To the living the Gospel had been preached. It has been preached also or even to the dead (καὶ νεκροῖς). Both will now share in judgment because both will have heard that which will save them from condemnation if they only accept it.

55 Augustine brings out the implications of the Descent in this manner: 'If we believe that it is possible for the soul beyond the grave to obtain forgiveness and to progress in knowledge and enlightenment, it is clear that the presence of our Lord in the other world and his communication with souls there, must have been a great stage of progress in their spiritual growth. It was thus with men on earth; but should we limit our Lord's work to this earth? ... We cannot believe that Christ went down to Hades in vain.' (Ep. clxiv)

Clearly if such an interpretation is upheld then one is moving towards the possibility of a universalist understanding of salvation. Such a view was current in the early church. It found expression in the idea that Christ also redeemed Adam - i.e. man per se - from the Underworld. This is to be seen in Origen.

56 see Sallie TeSelle, Speaking in Parables, London 1975. What is said here should be borne in mind in later chapters when consideration is given to later 'Christian' speculation.

57 J.A.MacCulloch, op.cit., p.313.

58 Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, vol.7 London 1971, p.147 cf. note 76. see also Pannenberg, op.cit.,p.91. Rahner and Pannenberg are right to emphasise the christological thrust of all this material and to insist that any thought about the departed is directly dependent upon it.

59 Apart from the parable of Dives and Lazarus which has already been considered and the tradition of the descent into Hades as witnessed to by I Peter where the term 'dead' probably refers to Jews and Gentiles alike (see note 54), and Mt.25:31-46 which is concerned with the final judgment, the New Testament displays no interest in the state of the non-Christian dead.

60 Lk.23:43, I Thes.4:16, Phil.1:23.

61 Mt.27:52, I Thes.4:14, Heb.11:39f., Rev.6:9.

62 see C.F.D.Moule, 'The Influence of Circumstances on the Use of Eschatological Terms', Journal of Theological Studies, n.s. xv (1964), p.1ff.

63 M.C.Perry, The Resurrection of Man, London 1975, p.105.

64 One notes by way of contrast that Paul can also explain the cases of death in the Church as a punishment of God for sin. In Corinth (see I Cor.11:29-32) it was for the unworthy celebration of the Lord's Supper. It is possible that such deaths before the Parousia had been interpreted in the earliest times as meaning that those who died were not granted the Messianic blessedness in spite of their belief in Jesus.

65 I Thes.4:16,17 cf. I Cor.15:23-8 ,50-5 , Mk.9:1.

Paul's eschatology at this point is disputed. It has been

contended (so Schweitzer) that Paul here reflects a belief that the Resurrection would only take place after the Messianic Kingdom. He must therefore assume that all the dead, including those who have fallen asleep only a little while before the Return of Jesus, have no part in the Messianic Kingdom but must wait until the Resurrection of the dead. But the case of those who had died believing in Jesus was a case not foreseen in the traditional eschatology, because it did not look for a coming of the future Messiah before the appearing of the Kingdom. In the face of this challenge Paul's decision was to the effect that these dead have not to wait for the resurrection which takes place at the end of the Messianic Kingdom, but that by an earlier special resurrection they became participants in the glory of the Messianic Kingdom just as much as the other Elect of the lost generation. (see A. Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, London 1931 p. 90f). Schweitzer (and with him P. Hoffmann, Lietzmann, and G. Vos who support the theory) is challenged on this count by Best who contends that the evidence is not clear enough to support the notion that Paul envisaged a millenial or temporally limited kingdom before the Resurrection. Certainly it should not be forgotten that for Paul (and for the whole of the New Testament) Christ already reigns. All that remains is for the final manifestation in power of what is already a present reality. see: C.K. Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, London 1968. p.356 ff; E. Best, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, London 1972 pp.181-3; 349-371.

66 That Paul believed the Parousia to be imminent is evident throughout the epistle (1:10; 3:13; 5: 1-11, 23) and from his other letters (e.g., Rom 13:11; I Cor. 7: 26, 29; 10:11; 15: 51f; 16:22; Phil. 4:5).

67 see Prayer and the Departed (ed. I.T.Ramsey) London 1971, p.43.

The regulative principle of the Mystical Body of Christ is coinherence, man's share in the communion of the Holy Trinity, whereby in Christ we pray for one another, bear one another's burdens, learn from one another. The solidarity of all men in Christ transcends the barriers of time, space and death, overcomes all things through the victory of Christ. Thus, if the term is to be used in this context, it clearly has implications for our understanding of the state of the departed and of prayer for the departed.

68 e.g. Acts 7 : 60.

69 so C.K. Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, London 1968. p.380.

70 Some scholars would prefer to seek the true background of the New Testament usage of 'sleep' in the Old Testament, where it may have a more specialised meaning than it carries in Hellenistic

literature. The imagine of sleep is regularly used in the Old Testament as a designation of death: e.g. Is, 43 : 17 (LXX) ; I Kings 2:10 ; 11:43 ; 22:40 - where it is used of an evil king Ahab!

According to De Vaux, the expressions 'to sleep with one's fathers' and 'to be reunited with one's own' which record the deaths of great Old Testament figures, patriarchs and Kings of Israel or Judah, perhaps originally referred to the custom of the family tomb where bodies were laid on ledges in chambers dug out of soft rock. Pedersen even thinks that such expressions indicate a belief that the departed spirits of the family somehow live together. On this understanding, the family grave becomes the site of the afterlife. Whatever their origin, it is clear that with time the words took on a deeper sense and became a solemn formula signifying death and at the same time emphasising that the ties of blood reached beyond the grave. With later emphasis on the role and importance of the Patriarchs, the notion of 'fathers' took on an even more specific meaning so that to die was to go to sleep with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and thus to be incorporate in their bliss. Thus to die (to sleep) meant to be at rest - in a state of peace. See: R. De Vaux, The Life and Institutions of Ancient Israel, London 1961 p.61. J. Pedersen, Israel, London 1959. I-II. p.462.

71 There may be a possible exception to this in Eph. 5:14.

72 I Cor. 15:20.

73 Mk. 5:39 ; Mt. 9:24.

74 Jn. 11:11-15.

75 I Thes. 4:14-17 ; I Cor. 15:51-52 ; Jn. 5:25.

76 Concerning the question of 'sleep' as a designation of an intermediate state:- R.E. Bailey, 'Is "sleep" the proper biblical term for the Intermediate State?' Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft. **55** (1964), 161-167; E. Best, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, London 1972. p.185; M.E. Dahl, The Resurrection of the Body, London 1962. pp. 119-120.

77 Apart from the obvious fact that no literal description of the life after death is intelligible because ex hypothesi it is not like this life here, to talk about an intermediate state as the sleep of the soul creates theological difficulties. As H.M. Luckock has pointed, on this count, death becomes: 'the passing from a realisation of the divine fellowship, which has already been felt and enjoyed so keenly, into a union at place and habitation with the object of his love, in which, no matter how close and immediate, the sleeping spirit can find no satisfaction.' (After Death, London 1880. (2nd edition) p.32)

78 M.C. Perry, op. cit., p.105.

79 cf. Rom. 8:38.

80 As Ernest Best points out: 'It is not intended to describe an intermediate state though it is adaptable to that concept' (E. Best, op. cit., p.185).

81 Everything that will be said in the ensuing paragraphs concerning the state of the faithful departed follows on from what has already been said concerning the new Christian perspective on death, and should therefore be placed in the context of the earlier discussion.

82 Phil. 1:23.

83 II Cor. 5:6 - 8.

84 F.W. Beare, The Epistle to the Philippians, London 1959. p.64.

85 see note 22.

86 II Cor. 5:8 ; Phil. 1:23. cf. I Thes. 4:17 see Note 21.

87 Phil. 1 : 23.

88 II Cor. 5:6, 8.

89 I Cor. 13:12.

90 Phil. 3:21.

91 Rom. 8:23. see on this: Pierre Benoît, 'Resurrection: At the End of Time or immediately after Death?', Concilium. 1970. vol.10. No: 6. pp.103-114.

92 In the course of time there developed a three-tier eschatology of the Church both in the East and in the West, in which the Church is conceived as existing simultaneously in three 'layers', militant, expectant and triumphant.

93 Rom. 8:18.

94 Phil. 4:5.

95 I Cor. 15:54.

96 I Cor. 15:28.

97 Eph. 2:6.

98 Col. 3: 1-3.

99 P. Althaus, Die letzten Dinge, 1927. p.152. as quoted by W. Künneth, The Theology of the Resurrection, London 1965. p.271 (also Munich 1951)

100 ibid.

101 Künneth, op.cit., p.271.

102 Richard Kingsbury, 'The Creativity of Death,' Christian, 2 (1975) p.345.

103 see especially in this context the article by Pierre Benoît in Concilium. (see above, note 91).
In the Pauline perspective man in his present existence lives as a psycho-somatic unity and at the resurrection this is transformed into a pneumatico-somatic unity. With regard to death there is silence - that is with the exception of his language about 'nakedness' in II Cor.5 which would seem to correspond to his idea of 'a bare (γυμνόν) grain' in I Cor.15:37. Quite what this means is uncertain (see below note 105). That there is continuity in the face of death is clear but the New Testament is unclear in its definitions. (see C.F.D.Moule, 'St.Paul and Dualism: The Pauline Conception of Resurrection,' New Testament Studies, 12 (1965-6), pp.106-123.

104 Helmut Thielicke, Tod und Leben, 1946, as quoted by Künneth, op.cit., p.272.

105 Various scholars have attempted to understand Paul's thought at this point and to provide some degree of clarity and precision in the exegesis of II Cor.5 . I refer here to but three such expositions and then only in outline.

C.F.D.Moule (ibid.,) is of the opinion that Paul believed in the possibility of an ultimate transformation of man, the transformation of his mortal and corruptible body (σῶμα ψυχικόν) into a spiritual and glorious body (σῶμα πνευματικόν). This transformation can only take place because God, by his glorious power, raised up Christ from the dead. Paul's thought is thus wholly Christ-centred and moreover wholly moral - Christ was raised as Son of God, he perfectly performed his Father's will. Our transfiguration is therefore bound up with our conformity to God's will in Christ. It is a gradual process between the moment when a man comes to be in Christ and the moment of the Parousia. The event of death is specially critical in this process. Death marks the difference between walking by faith and walking by sight. It is Moule's contention, however, that II Cor.5 concerns the manner rather than the moment of the change. Whereas I Cor.15 implies that the new is added to the old and superimposed, II Cor.5:4 implies that the new is received only in exchange for the old. Death, therefore, constitutes for the believer the ultimate acceptance of his mortality which is decaying, and his total surrender to God in order that the new man, Christ himself, whom he has already put on in baptism, may be perfected in him. The believer's relationship to Christ would seem to be direct and immediate and Moule finds no place for interpreting 'nakedness' as a designation of a particular post-mortem state.

Kümmel thinks Paul does not envisage a bodiless existence but a 'preliminary waiting for the appearance of Christ.' In II Cor.5:1f. Paul 'expresses the yearning to put on the "house from heaven" in order not to be found naked, and with these words he appears to give expression to the wish immediately after death to receive the heavenly body (spiritual body - I Cor.15), and thus to die before the Parousia.' see W.G. Kümmel, The Theology of the New Testament, London 1973, pp. 237-40.

However, according to C.K.Barrett, 'it is precisely bodilessness that makes this period of waiting undesirable in Paul's eyes' .. 'In the event of death "a natural body is sown, a spiritual body is raised up" (I Cor.15:4) But raising up does not follow immediately upon sowing; what of the interval? This is the period of waiting and what makes it undesirable is that the natural body has perished in death and the spiritual body has not yet been conferred.' (The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, London 1973, p.154f.) This interpretation contrasts with some of the more positive language of Rom.8:38f., & Phil.1:23. But then again, perhaps this is another example of the tension that exists between collective and individualistic language?

see also on this: Pierre Benoît, 'Resurrection: At the End of Time or immediately after death?' Concilium, 10 (1970), pp.103-114 ; R.Berry, 'Death and Life in Christ: the meaning of II Cor. 5:1-10,' Scottish Journal of Theology, xiv (1961), p.60ff. ; O.Cullman, Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Body? London 1958 ; M.E.Dahl, The Resurrection of the Body, London 1962, pp.71-84.

106 Perhaps one is forced to conclude with C.K.Barrett that 'Paul had not yet fully integrated his eschatological programme with his conviction that God was Lord over life and death alike and that those who were in Christ could not be separated from him.' (The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, London 1973. p.155)

107 J.Baillie, And the Life Everlasting, London 1934, p.198.

108 Rom.8:18-25.

109 I Cor.15:20 ; I Thes.4:14.

110 Jn.5:25-9 ,8:51, 11:26 ; Heb.4:9-13 ; I Jn.3:2,14.

111 II Cor.5:8 ; Phil.1:23 .

112 W.Künneth, The Theology of the Resurrection, London 1965, p.273.

113 To quote Künneth again: 'Theologically, the "intermediate state" can be spoken of only in such a way that at once two lines are drawn which bring out clearly the provisional separation which takes place between men immediately after death ... For the non-Christian and the unbeliever, the "intermediate state" means an existence far from God ... Anguish and remorse can here make plain the difference between this and the earthly mode of existence, because once earthly limitations have been overcome,

then indeed the true insight is given into the situation as it is before God. (Lk.16:19f.; Mt.5:26 , 18:34) This state is characterised as one of waiting in dire distress for God's final judgment of rejection.' (ibid.,)

114 E.Stauffer, New Testament Theology, p.213.

115 At any rate since the date of II Mac.12:43-5 (mid-1st century B.C. ?) - see chapter one.

116 see J.N.D.Kelly, A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, London 1963, p.171 ; C.H.H.Wright, The Intermediate State and Prayers for the Dead, London 1900, pp.187-91.

117 A.J.Maclean, 'Prayer for the Departed,' Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics, ed., J.Hastings, Edinburgh 1908-1921, vol.X p.210.

118 The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is often cited in this context, it being held to show that Jesus' thinking included as a natural and intelligible factor the idea of the departed praying for the living - though one notes that there is no encouragement given to us to expect that such a prayer can have any effects! But as already stated in this chapter, it is unwise to make doctrinal deductions from incidental parabolic imagery - and particularly so from this parable. It is also hazardous to imagine that Jesus must have approved of contemporary Jewish practice of praying for the dead on the contention that our Lord approved everything in the teachings of the Jews that he did not condemn.

The mention of 'baptism for the dead' in I Cor.15:29 which for all its obscurities looks uncommonly like vicarious baptism, has also been cited as evidence that Paul does not express disapproval of the idea that prayer might be used to affect the status before God of the unbelieving departed; but the multitude of conflicting interpretations of what really was the practice obliquely referred to in this verse is so notorious that its value for the present controversy is negligible. On this see: C.K.Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, London 1968, pp.362-5, and other commentaries.

Some scholars hold that the Apocalypse gives support to the idea of the departed praying for us - for example the prayer in Rev. 6:9ff. made by the souls under the altar. Unfortunately, this is really no more than those martyred for Christ forswearing personal vengeance (see the similar imagery in Lev.17:11), their innocent death crying out for the ultimate justice of God in the final day. In the words of R.H.Charles: 'The living pray to God to free them from unjust oppression and secure them their just rights. On the other hand, the departed pray for vengeance for what they have suffered or lost.' It must be admitted that there is a prima facie embarrassment for the Christian reader in such a prayer for vengeance. Certainly there is an element of personal vindictiveness in the prayer of the martyrs which is not to be found in the parallel passage in the teaching of Jesus (Lk.18:7,8).

But as G.B.Caird has pointed out (op.cit., p.85) John is here using the language not of private revenge but of public justice. Caird makes the point that in a Hebrew lawcourt there was no public prosecutor, charged with the suppression of crime. All cases were civil cases, in which a plaintiff must plead his own cause and the judge must decide whether he was in the right or in the wrong; so that any failure of the judge to vindicate the plaintiff was tantamount to a decision in favour of the defendant. The martyrs have been condemned in a human court of law, and that decision stands against them unless it is reversed in a higher court. But the heavenly judge cannot declare them to be in the right without at the same time declaring their persecutors to be in the wrong and passing sentence against them. Justice must not only be done; it must be seen to be done. It may still be objected that legal terminology is the wrong language to use, and that John would have done better to follow the examples of Jesus and Stephen by putting on the lips of the martyrs a prayer of forgiveness for their enemies.... But as Caird argues, such an objection misses the point of what John is saying. He cannot avoid legal language when he is dealing with men who have been condemned before a pagan tribunal and writing for the benefit of others who must face a like jeopardy. The point at issue here is not the personal relations of the martyrs with their accusers but the validity of their faith. (G.B. Caird, The Revelation of St.John the Divine, London 1966 ; R.H.Charles, Revelation of St.John, Edinburgh 1920.)

119 e.g. Eph.6:18.

120 Similarly when James was martyred by Herod, and Peter imprisoned (Acts 12:1-5), the Church concentrated on prayer for the living Peter; there is no hint that they thought that prayer for the dead James would be either useful or fitting.

121 A.J.Mason, Purgatory, The State of the Faithful Departed and the Invocation of Saints, London 1901, p.60.

122 see note 106.

123 A.T.Hanson, 'The Christian Hope,' A Dictionary of Christian Theology, ed., Alan Richardson, London 1969, p.160.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SUB-APOSTOLIC CHURCH TO THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD CENTURY

a) THE SUB-APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The generations stretching from the Apostolic Age to the middle of the second century saw a rapid expansion of the Christian Church both geographically and numerically. In spite of the fact that the Church was already bereft of an obvious centre by the turn of the first century, successive decades witnessed a progressive evangelisation of the Empire and a consolidation of existing Christian communities. Jerusalem had been destroyed after the revolt in the year 70 and Antioch, although for a time the base of missionary activity, never really took its place. Rome, as the imperial capital, was already rising to prominence among Christians, but it did not as yet possess the same historic claims to their veneration as either Jerusalem or Antioch. The Church was thus in outward appearance a somewhat amorphous association during this period, held together by its ministry and missionary zeal and circumscribed by pagan suspicion on the one hand, and Jewish intolerance on the other.

In the face of such opposition, it might have been thought that the inner life and teaching of the Church would have quickly been welded into a complete homogeneity. Theological systematisation, however, does not seem to have occurred, least of all in connection with thought about life after death. The Apostolic Fathers are largely silent on the issue and naturally so; for the Church in this period was occupied with more pressing concerns than the formulation of dogmas about the condition of the faithful between death and the resurrection. To this extent, therefore, it would probably be correct to assume that the attitude of the Sub-Apostolic Church towards the state of the departed was largely continuous with that of the primitive Church. Certainly there are no clear-cut pronouncements on the subject which would appear contrary to such a

conclusion, and like the New Testament, what evidence there is, is open to more than one interpretation.

For example, the long liturgical portion of Clement of Rome's Epistle to the Corinthians (96?), which probably reflects the contemporary Eucharistic prayer of the Church in Rome,[1] though it contains petitions for all sorts and conditions of living men both within and without the Christian family, it makes no reference of any sort to the Christian dead. Similarly, the Didache (c.100?)[2] in its prayers at the agape (eucharist?), only prays God to remember his Church and deliver it from all evil, to perfect it in his love and to maintain its unity - a petition which must in its wording include the whole Church, but which does not explicitly mention the departed.

> Let your Church be brought together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom .... Remember, Lord, your Church, to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in your love, and to bring it together ....[3]

It should be admitted that this lack of evidence - at least of an unambiguous kind - continues well into the middle of the second century. It would, however, be all too easy to misconstrue or distort its significance for, as has already been pointed out, pronouncements on the state of the departed or the liturgical commemoration of the Christian dead are not likely to have found a place in the letters of Ignatius or to have been of concern to Polycarp. The whole thrust of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers is against the inclusion of any material relevant to such subjects. One should certainly be wary of concluding from their apparent silence, that the thought of the Church in this period must of necessity have stagnated. The mere fact of the delay of the Parousia would have precluded any simple restatement of earlier teaching. As time went on and as more and more believers 'fell asleep' and the sense of living in the last hours of a dying Age began to fade, so the Church inevitably found itself involved in the slow process of adjusting to the prospect of an indefinitely long future in the world. And this new situation must have demanded a new orientation of thought.

It is more appropriate, therefore, to envisage the thought of the Church about the state of the departed continuing to develop and deepen in accordance with the trends already apparent in the writings of the New Testament and in relation to its new circumstances. That this was in fact the case would seem to be suggested by the evidence of inscriptions found in Christian tombs.

Although some scholars have challenged the relevance and importance of early Christian inscriptions, disparaging their testimony as so much pious superstition, reflecting more 'popular Christianity' than 'authentic' Christian belief, the invaluable insights which they provide into the atmosphere of the period and into the mind of the Church, are, I would maintain, of the utmost significance. The memorials of the age provide us at least with the possibility of an answer to several questions which otherwise, because of the dearth of suitable evidence might needs have to go unanswered. Obviously the ultimate worth of such inscriptions is entirely dependent upon ~~them~~ their being genuine and their date beyond doubt. Clearly questions such as these lie outside the scope of this discussion.[4] All that can be done in this limited investigation is to reproduce the consensus of current scholarship on any point of contention. For example, with regard to dating it is now generally agreed that early-dated inscriptions are rare. Nevertheless, it is also apparent that many undated inscriptions do undoubtedly come from the second century and some perhaps from the first. These early inscriptions are characterised by a supreme simplicity, some consisting of no more than the name of the deceased and the simple designation '<u>PAX</u>' or '<u>IN PACE</u>'. While it would be wrong to see too much in a single phrase,[5] it is equally futile to suggest that such expressions in no way reflect contemporary understandings about the state of the departed but merely indicate say, for example, the fact that the deceased had died in communion with the Catholic Church and nothing more. For one thing, as H.M. Luckock points out,[6] it is highly improbable that among the early Christians the number of those who had been

cut off and excommunicated could have been so great as to call for a distinguishing formula on behalf of those who had not - not that the language used is specifically Christian anyway![7] Moreover, the frequent occurrence of more positive inscriptions such as 'May you live in peace', statements which may or may not be said to constitute a prayer for the departed in the technical sense of a petition, would at least suggest that we are dealing with something more than just a Christian 'hallmark'. It is rather much better to take such language at face value, as implying a belief that the dead person was in a state of peace and rest - though even here, there is room for debate in the opinion of Jean Daniélou.

Jean Daniélou has argued[8] that the theme of rest and the sense attached to requies particularly as he finds it exemplified in V Esdras[9] (in which the word occurs at least twice: Veniet requies tua, 'Your rest shall come' (2 : 24), and, Requiem aeternitatis dabit vobis, 'He shall give you eternal rest' (2 : 34),) is typical of its use in the earliest Latin patristic writing, in that it is not concerned with the repose of the soul after death, which is its meaning in the pagan inscriptions of the period. On the contrary, he suggests it refers to the rest of the seventh day, the sabbath rest, and is therefore synonymous not with quiet repose but with festivity. In Jewish apocalyptic writing and in early Judaeo-Christian texts[10] the term certainly denotes eternal life. Daniélou locates the meaning of primitive Christian inscriptions precisly within this Jewish tradition, and accordingly argues for an eschatological interpretation of the language, whereby requies may be said to denote not an intermediate state (though by the time of Tertullian the term had come to refer to the blessed state of the souls of the righteous after death[11]) but rather eschatological blessedness, the eternal rest of those who have been raised up from death.

This interpretation though not without its opponents, does among other things serve to exclude the formation of hasty and perhaps simplistic judgments which might identify, in a quite arbitrary way, talk about "rest' with talk about an 'intermediate' state. By exploring the eschatological grounding and direction of early Christian

thought, Daniélou maintains the ambivalence of Christian language about life after death and points to what was effectively a period of transition and re-orientation in theology. One can see clearer intimations of this process when comparison is made between the earliest inscriptions and some of the more specific inscriptions which have been found in the Cemetery of Priscilla at Rome, dating in all probability from either the first or second century (but certainly no later than the beginning of the third), and which incidentally provide us with firm evidence for the early practice of prayer for the departed in at least some, if not all Christian circles. For example:[12]

> Stafilius, peace be with thee in God. Hail and farewell.
>
> O Father of all, take into thy keeping Irene, Zoe and Marcellus whom thou didst make; thine be the glory in Christ. ☧ [13]

One of the fullest inscriptions known is one found in Phrygia which gives the remains of the famous epitaph made for himself by Avircus (Abercius) Marcellus, Bishop of Hieropolis. Stevenson dates the memorial as being c.182[14] and it actually incorporates a plea that all those who come to the catacombs should pray for the deceased.

> I, a citizen of the elect city, erected this tomb in my lifetime, that I might have clearly there a place for my body; my name is Avircius, a disciple of the pure Shepherd who feeds the flocks of sheep on mountains and plains, who has great all-seeing eyes; he taught me ..... faithful scriptures. To Rome he sent me to behold sovereignty and to see a queen, golden-robed and golden sandalled; a people I saw there which has a splended seal, and I saw the plain of Syria and all the cities, and Nisibis, crossing the Euphrates; but everywhere I met with brethren; with Paul before me, I followed, and faith everywhere led the way and served food everywhere, the Fish from the spring-immense, pure which the Virgin caught and gave to her friends to eat for ever, with good wine, giving the cup with the loaf. These things I Avircius ordered to be written thus in my presence. I am truly seventy-two years old. Let him who understands these things, and everyone who is in agreement, pray for Avircius.

> No one is to put anyone else into my tomb; otherwise he is to pay the Roman treasury 2000 gold pieces and my good native city of Hieropolis 1000 gold pieces. [15]

The language of the epitaph is obviously enigmatic, Christianity being represented only cryptically, and this was the author's intention. Yet though composed in such a way that it could not have given offence to a pagan, to those who understood, the tombstone was a permanent testimony to Avircius' faith in the unity of the Catholic Church, a faith in which he died and in confidence of which he could beseech his fellow Christians to pray for him. The atmosphere of this and all the early memorial inscriptions is thus one of the quiet confidence and trust, one which was a natural and fitting expression of the Easter faith and of Christian solidarity in the redemptive and reconciling love of Christ. Although general in nature as perhaps befitted the reticence of the age, the inscriptions are marked in their characteristic use of the images of light, peace, refreshment and rest, and in this respect they both anticipate later liturgical development[16] and reflect the Christian understanding of death, the latter of which was already finding exemplification in Christian funeral practices.

St. Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians had warned his converts 'not to grieve' for the dead 'as the rest' of the world 'who have no hope.'[17] For believers to die was to depart and be with Christ; death could not separate them from the love of God or from the fellowship of the saints. On the contrary, it was the beginning of a fuller life , the moment when the goal was attained and the labours of this world were ended. Although we know little of the detail of early Christian funerary customs,[18] except by way of reconstruction from later sources, one can be certain that this understanding of death must have from the first exercised a decisive influence in their development.[19] In fact, nothing could have more sharply distinguished the early Christians from their pagan neighbours than their attitude of confident expectation in the face of death. The pagan cremated his dead;[20] Christians preferred the older and

better custom of burying them,[21] a practice which in the first place was a survival of Jewish custom, but which was also a practice which had been hallowed by the burial of Jesus. The pagan funeral would be usually conducted at night,[22] torches being borne in procession to ward off ill luck and bad influences, for funerals were bad omens. The Christian funeral was conducted in the daytime and when circumstances permitted, according to H.B. Swete, palms and flowers, lights and incense, psalms and anthems attended the body to its resting place,[23] all expressive of the idea of the triumph over death. Obviously at this early stage, the procedure was in no way stereotyped[24] and local differences in custom were inevitable. Even so, from the first one can be confident in assuming that the Christian funeral was characterised by the note of peace and hope, confidence in the felicity of the departed and the certainty that death had erected no real barrier.

Something of this atmosphere is communicated in the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp (155 /6?) given by the Church of Smyrna. Admittedly the circumstances surrounding a martyrdom are exceptional and consequently cannot be taken as the norm for Christian practice. Nevertheless, something of the confident trust and joy associated with the death of a believer is inescapable:

> So we afterwards took up his bones, more valuable than previous stones and finer than gold, and laid them where it was fitting. There the Lord will permit us, as shall be possible to us, to assemble ourselves together in joy and gladness, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom, alike in memory of them that have fought before, and for the training and preparation of them that are to fight hereafter.[25]

This account is also interesting in that it shows that the natalicia of martyrs were kept as early as 155/6?.[26] The mention of ἀγαλλίασις and χαρά suggests in this respect an anniversary agape or even commemorative Eucharist, but one cannot be certain on this point.[27] It is certainly illustrative of the way in which the love and thanksgiving with which the Christian community held its dead members naturally came to be expressed in the corporate devotional

life of the church. And in this respect alone it must be held to provide important evidence for the developing growth of opinion about the state of the departed.

All in all, the cumulative weight of evidence points to the conclusion which has already been hinted at in passing, namely that with the sub-apostolic era, one is dealing not with the simple reduplication of earlier thought about the departed, but rather with a genuine period of gestation in Christian theology. Although reappraisal is not evident in the theological writings of the period, the Apostolic Fathers being silent on the issue, the evidence of early inscriptions in the catacombs is indisputable in its testimony that in the area of private devotion, thought about the departed was definitely developing, a development which eventually resulted in the emergence of prayer for the departed. Since this was a development which in the first instance arose neither from theological nor ecclesiastical motives but from the simple love and concern of ordinary people, or as G. Gardner put it, 'not amid the excited debates of ecclesiastical assemblies, but through the quiet, devout thoughts of the "general heart" of the Church,'[28] it follows that the initial growing point for thought about the state of the departed in this early period should be located precisely in the subconscious instincts of ordinary Christians. That such a conclusion is entirely correct is supported by the evidence of what can only be termed an 'undergrowth' in Christian thought. For if the period of the Sub-Apostolic Church was the gestation period for what was to become 'orthodox' thought about the departed and their state, it was equally the spawning ground for a more popular speculative theology.

Man has always had an intense desire to learn what lay beyond the grave and the other side of silence and as was noted earlier in another context, mythological pictures, stories and legends have from the first attempted to satisfy that desire. Confronted with a speculative pagan environment, one in which stories about visits to the Other World and visions of Paradise and Hades circulated freely, Christianity in the urgency of its challenge

was, no doubt, initially firm in offering only a healthy reticence in this area of thought. However, with the progressive evangelisation of the Roman world it was almost inevitable that as converts from other beliefs came into the Church, so Christianity, like Judaism before it, should not escape the formation of similar stories.[29] Thus it is hardly surprising to find that already by the beginning of the second century, fictitious accounts of visits to the Other-World were starting to circulate among Christians. For example, on the one hand many of the converts entering the Church from Judaism were probably continuing to think of the righteous dead as awaiting the Parousia in a place similar to that which they had been accustomed to speak of as Abraham's Bosom;[30] and on the other hand, converts from paganism were still moulded in their outlook by images of Tartarus and Hades. It is difficult to know to what extent these inherited images of the life to come maintained their traditional meaning or to what extent they received a new application. Images convey different impressions to different people and, moreover, can even mean different things to the same people at different times! At its most potent, an image is no more than a means of communicating something indescribable but <u>there</u>. This fact should be borne in mind because in so much discussion of this literature a great deal of misunderstanding has been - and still is - generated by taking the image to be the thing in itself the picture to be what it is meant to convey.

One of the earliest of these christian accounts, one that describes in some detail Paradise and Hell, is the work known as the <u>Apocalypse of Peter</u> (c.125).[31] Needless to say, the Apostle never wrote it though there is some evidence of the second Epistle of Peter having been utilised. A work had more chance of popularity when, by the usual literary artifice of the time it was ascribed to a great name. It stands today as an outstanding example of the type of writing by means of which the pictorial ideas of Heaven and Hell were taken over into the Christian Church.[32] In contrast to the <u>Revelation of John</u> which displays the final struggle and triumph of Jesus Christ, its interest no longer lies on the person of the Redeemer, but on the situation in the after-life, on the description of different classes of sinner, on

the punishment of the sin and the salvation of the righteous,[33] and in this it was a precursor of an entire tradition in Christian thought.

The fragment of the Apocalypse which survives (the text survives in Ethiopic and Akhminic) begins with a short discourse on the last things given by Christ, the time probably being after the resurrection. Christ then bids the twelve to follow him to a mountain to pray where they ask him to show them 'one of our righteous brethren that had departed from the world'[34] that they may take courage and so encourage their hearers in turn. Two figures suddenly appear shining and clad in inexpressible glory and beauty, their bodies whiter than snow and redder than the rose, their long hair thick and curling. The disciples are amazed. Peter asks who the men are and is told they are the righteous dead.[35] Then he asks again, where the righteous are and of what sort is their world. A vision is given to him alone of a great bright space outside the world, with unfading flowers, spices and fruits.[36] Angels encircle its radiant inhabitants, who praise God with one voice.

Over against this place the Apostle Peter sees another place 'very squalid'[37] where the wicked are chastised by tormenting angels in dark raiment like the atmosphere of the place. The remainder of the fragment describes in lurid detail the various punishments allotted to different classes of sinners. For example, blasphemers are hung by the tongue over a flaming fire,[38] murderers are in a narrow place wallowing among writhing reptiles;[39] usurers stand up to the knees in a lake of pitch, blood and boiling mire.[40] One of the more interesting examples though concerns the punishment of women who have procured abortions, for it is illustrative of the way in which pagan material was rapidly being assumed into Christian tradition, and only with time being fully assimilated and re-fashioned according to Christian principles. In the Apocalypse of Peter, the parents of children killed through abortion or premature births are said to be tortured unceasingly in discharge and excrement up to their throats. Opposite them (according to the Akhminic version) sit their unborn children 'weeping'.[41] In this

case both guilty and innocent would appear to suffer the same fate, there being no moral differentiation. This is clearly a purely pagan notion based on a belief in Tartarus (the abode of the prematurely dead), not at all in accord with Christian beliefs. Thus it is all the more interesting to note how in the Apocalypse of Paul which appeared around 375 and which reworked much of the earlier material from the Petrine Apocalypse, there is to be found a different situation, with the children being no longer in suffering, following their intercession to God for justice.[42] In this later work a change in state after death is obviously considered possible and moral differentiation in the afterlife insisted upon as a natural concomitant of christian belief. In this change is prefigured the eventual pattern of development in thought about the departed.

Consideration of the Apocalypse of Peter as a representative example of Christian apocryphal literature shows how early Christian imagination was at work envisaging the life after death, with a blissful Paradise for the elect and a Hell of lurid torments for the wicked as both awaited the coming Final Judgment. In this the imagination of the writer followed familiar lines already established by his Jewish and pagan contemporaries. Of his profound dogmatic purpose of urging the heathen to come to faith and live righteously, there can be no doubt; but it was inevitable that once Christian thought was promoted in this way, it would only be a matter of time before certain aspects of pagan beliefs which had been originally embroidered on the fabric of Christian theology, partly through inheritance, partly through the merit of aesthetic desirability, would come to receive the veneer of Christian respectability simply through familiarity and popular consent. Indeed, as the centuries passed and evangelisation of the Empire progressed, so this influence of paganized Christianity is to be seen increasingly in many aspects of the thought and life of the Church, not the least in the area of thought about the departed. For the moment, however, it would be true to say that that influence was negligible, being confined to a minority of Christians in the Sub-Apostolic Church. At this stage

the Apocalypse of Peter does not represent the general character of Christian thought. In its provenance, however, it is both an indication of the movement of popular thought and the germ of a veritable undergrowth in Christian theology.

The Sub-Apostolic Church thus presents a three-fold picture with regard to thought about the Christian dead. Theologically, the general silence of the Apostolic Fathers would seem to indicate a continuity with the perspectives of the primitive Church as embodied in the canonical writings of the New Testament, though as has been noted, the delay in the parousia must have proscribed the mere re-duplication of all aspects of earlier thought. For example, it is apparent that it was already underlining the anomaly of the double judgement. Those who had died were often thought of, in the light of the parable of Dives and Lazarus for example, to be in Paradise or Hades and therefore, to have been in some sense individually judged at the time of their deaths. But a second universal and public judgement was nevertheless supposed to await them at the great assize on the Last Day. As long as this was still expected at any moment no great problem seems to have been felt about the state of the departed during the interim period. But as the Last Day began to distance itself into the remote future, so also the thought of the second judgement began to fade within the Christian imagination and as a consequence, the sentence pronounced upon the individual as he passed out of this life was coming to be invested with greater significance. The event of death was becoming the real crisis upon which men's hopes and fears were fixed. Such an orientation of thought is certainly supported by the other evidence of the times.

Devotionally the testimony of early Christian inscriptions declares the quiet emergence of prayer for the departed, prayer which was entirely personal and marked by the attributes of confidence, trust and joy in the face of death. On the other hand, at the level of 'popular theology', where the missionary activity of the Church was drawing men and women of differing persuasions and backgrounds into her fold, there ~~is~~ are to be found the beginnings of a more speculative thought about death and the after-life in which primitive

Christian agnosticism was being fast eroded by an infectious pagan gnosticism.

Thus, it is only in the focus of the light shed by these areas of growth that a true picture of the thought of the Church in this period may be found, for it indicates that in the hundred years since the death of the Apostles, what on the surface appears to be stability, in fact hides the possibility of significant developments which in the succeeding century were to be sustained and exemplified.

b) THE CHURCH BETWEEN 160 and 220

With the continued evangelisation of the pagan world and increasing hostility in parts of the Roman state to Christianity, by the middle of the second century the Church desperately needed to engage her adversaries in some sort of intelligent dialogue. The problems of converted intellectuals, of pagan ridicule and philosophic attack combined to make Christians feel insecure. Answers were urgently needed to the two-fold accusation that Christianity was a threat to the Roman Empire because it undermined the social fabric; and that it was, philosophically speaking, nonsense, a superstition mixed with philosophical fragments. If the Apostolic Fathers had written for their fellow Christians, the Apologists were now required to write for a world of educated pagans.[43]

Justin Martyr (d.163), one of the foremost of the Apologists, upheld a distinctively futurist eschatology in the course of his various writings. Central to his thought on this subject was a vivid belief in the second advent of Christ. Indeed, for one who had such an apologetic motivation, it is remarkable how little the delay in the Parousia seems to have worried him! Justin puts the judgement, when men will be judged before the throne of God according to their deeds, immediately after the second advent or at the close of the millennium.[44] Every man - the living and the dead - reaching as far back as Adam - will appear before the great assize.[45] In common with traditional Christian eschatology, he envisaged Christ and his angels suddenly appearing on the clouds of heaven, at which point the resurrection was to occur when the souls of men would be reunited with the bodies they had discarded at death. He even claimed that his opponents ought not to have objected to such an idea of survival after death since they had much the same in their own traditions:

> Treat us at least like these; we believe in God not less than they do, but rather more, since we look forward to receiving again our own bodies, though they be dead and buried in the earth, declaring that nothing is impossible to God. 46

From such comments it would appear that Justin accepted a belief

(albeit implicitly) in some sort of intermediate state following death. In fact, he emphatically states as much in his Dialogue with Trypho:

> If you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, who do not admit (the resurrection), but dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and say that there is no resurrection of the dead but that their souls at the time of their death are taken up to heaven, do not regard them as Christians. 47

In this way Justin could distinguish within his eschatological system some sort of state beyond death in which souls were to await the Resurrection and the Last Judgement. It was a state, moreover, which embraced a degree of differentiation in the condition of the departed.[48] It was Justin's opinion, for example, that all men retained their powers of sense perception after death,[49] and it followed, therefore, that both wicked and righteous must already have knowledge of their ultimate destinies, the wicked already feeling the horrors of the fires of damnation, and the saved, already participating in the blessings to come. With regard to the latter which is, of course, the particular concern of this study, Justin speaks of them as being immortalized (ἀπαθανατίζεσθαι)[50], a term which clearly refers to no present possession but rather to a future event in which the souls of the blessed will in some way be transformed; though this is not to deny the possibility that Justin may also have envisaged the existence of a more dynamic process of 'immortalizing' occurring perhaps from death onwards. Whatever the case, the term of this process is an existence beyond ~~sensation~~ suffering (βιώσαντες ἐν ἀπαθείᾳ)[51] in which the blessed will live with God (συγγενήσεσθαι τῷ θεῷ)[52], an eternal and pure life where nothing evil can cause disturbance.

Similar views to those of Justin based on similar presuppositions are to be found in the writing of Irenaeus (130-200). In considering the apologetic writing[54] of Irenaeus it should be remembered that Irenaeus was concerned to defend Christianity not so much against pagan philosophers of his day as against the more

insidious dangers of gnosticism. Quite what the gnostics believed in relation to the state of the departed is uncertain. The diversity of their systems defeats any detailed reconstruction and the fact that much of the necessary information is only to be found in the writings of their orthodox opponents, since only a few fragments of their own works have survived, means that any conclusion that is formulated will be somewhat conditional in nature.[56] From Irenaeus, and particularly from his work Adversus Haereses, it would appear that the Gnostics denied the Resurrection and believed in the soul's immediate entrance into the Pleroma at death. Furthermore, it would seem that certain Catholics were being influenced by such Gnostic views or at least, by hellenistic opinions of the soul's destiny, for they too did not believe in the Resurrection, holding that the soul went to a heavenly place (in supercaelestem locum) at death;[57] hence Irenaeus' concern to assert authoritative Christian doctrine on the subject.

Irenaeus bases his argument, interestingly enough, on Christ's descent to Hades. Christ, on dying, did not go to Heaven, but remained for three days in the realm of the dead. If Christ observed the law of the dead, going to where the souls of the dead were, and only after that rising, then it must follow, according to Irenaeus, that

> the souls of his disciples also, for whom he wrought these things, go into an invisible place appointed for them by God, and there abide even until the Resurrection, waiting for the Resurrection. Then, receiving again their bodies, and rising complete, that is, with their bodies, even as the Lord rose, thus and not otherwise they will come to the vision of God. [58]

Quite what the 'invisible place', referred to in the above passage, is, is not made clear by Irenaeus. One can only assume that it refers to a better part of Hades. Certainly, in the earlier portion of his work where he speaks of the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Irenaeus concludes, among other things that 'each sort of people receive their meet habitation, even before the judgment,' one of them being Abraham's Bosom.[59] It can, therefore, probably

be assumed that the 'invisible place' is Abraham's Bosom; for one notes that after the Judgment, the final places of reward for the righteous are Heaven, Paradise and the Heavenly City,[60] and in this they are distinguished from the 'unseen place'. Whatever its identity though, that a belief in some sort of intermediate state between death and resurrection was both acceptable to Irenaeus and, what is more, necessarily 'orthodox' (if one may presume to use this term in this early period of doctrinal development) is abundantly clear from his writings. This fact is highly significant, for not only does it represent further evidence for the developing pattern of Christian thought about the departed in that it establishes that by 185 (the date of the Adversus Haereses) unambiguous teaching on the subject was being given by the Fathers; but it also indicates, by deduction, that such teaching must have held sway in the Church for some little time previous for it to have become acceptable Christian belief.

In this respect the work of Irenaeus and of the early Apologists in general would seem to confirm the conclusions which were emerging from consideration of early second-century thought; namely, that thought about the Christian dead and the notion of an intermediate state, far from being a sudden or late development in Christian theology, presumably precipitated by an influx of pagan thought into the Church and as such a perversion of the primitive Apostolic Testimony, was in fact the natural working out of the implications of a genuine New Testament perspective, which initially received expression in private prayers of Christians and then subsequently, in the latter half of the second century, in the writings of the Apologists and anti-gnostic Fathers who were concerned at once to promote the faith and to secure it from the cancer of more spurious theological speculations.

That speculation about the state of the departed was increasing during this period is apparent from the rapid rise of popular literature on the subject. Although much of this literature was Gnostic in origin and consequently Gnostic in the orientation of its thought, (as Bornkamm has pointed out) it nevertheless 'enjoyed great favour in orthodox circles, as Christian

literature for edification and entertainment'. This Bornkamm deduces from its 'manifold textual history' and in particular from the tendency recognisable in many of the extant versions 'towards the expurging of the Gnostic element and the assimilation to Catholic doctrine.'[61] It was against such an infiltration of pagan thought that the Fathers were fighting, but in most intellectual battles there is never simply negation, reception is also involved. So in this period, one finds the acceptance of religious ideas as well as their rejection. Admittedly, consideration of the Apologetic Movement might lead one, almost instinctively, to imagine that the relationship between Paganism and Christianity was one of a duel to the death, an encounter between two great systems of belief which had been inevitable from the first and which ultimately could only be settled by the extinction of one or the other. But as Gerald Bonner has pointed out,[62] such a view is a gross simplification of what was in fact an extended process which involved 'dialogue as well as polemics.' As has already been acknowledged, in these early years, neither Paganism nor Christian thought formed a closed or unified system. Paganism, on the one hand, represented 'not simply or even primarily a matter of religious commitment' but more 'a set of beliefs and conventions rather broadly based upon certain religious assumptions, generally accepted and rejected only at the price of becoming a social outsider.'[63] And early Christianity, on the other hand, having neither geographical centre, nor authoritative creed, nor even a fixed canon of scripture as yet, appeared to be more of a movement than an identifiable institution. Orthodoxy was not yet clearly designated from heresy and in such a climate, the development of existing areas of contact between the two enemies was inevitable. Succeeding years saw the appearance of the Acts of John (c.160)[64], the Acts of Peter (c.175)[65], the Acts of Paul (c.175),[66] which incorporated the Acts of Paul and Thecla, the Acts of Thomas (c.200)[67] and the Passion of St. Perpetua (c.210),[68] all of which in their various ways may be said to incorporate aspects of the thought of popular

Christianity during the period. Most of them incorporate visions of the Other World[69] and all bear the marks of the influence of Paganism and Gnosticism and as such provide abundant testimony to the symbiotic growth of opinion about the departed which was now occuring not simply on the fringes of Christianity, but at its very 'roots'. Time prevents an examination of all these documents in their totality and attention will therefore be confined to three specific examples of the thought of the period as found exemplified in the Acts of John; the Acts of Paul and Thecla; and the Passion of St. Perpetua.

The Acts of John are interesting, among other things, for a reference they make to the Apostle 'breaking bread' at a tomb on the third day after death:

> Now on the next day .... he came to the sepulchre at dawn, it being now the third day (from) Drusiana's (death), so that they might break bread there.[70]

This description would seem to point to a commemorative agape or eucharist being held at the graveside. Quite whether this may be said to represent normal Christian practice or the practice of a paganized sect following contemporary pagan custom of holding feasts at the tombs of the dead, is uncertain; though the restrained character of the language would tell against the latter alternative. Certainly, if it does refer to the celebration of the eucharist then we are presented with early evidence of a Christian practice that will be considered normative by the time of Augustine.[71]

The Acts of Paul and Thecla, Queen Tryphanena is solicited by her dead daughter Falconilla in a dream to beg the prayers of Thecla[72] for her removal to the abode of the just (ἵνα μετατεθῶ εἰς τὸν δίκαιον τόπον). Upon this Tryphaena calls Thecla and says: 'Thecla, my second child, come and pray for my child, that she may live.' (Τέκνον μου δεύτερον Θέκλα, δεῦρο πρόσευξαι ὑπὲρ τοῦ τέκνου μου, ἵνα ζήσεται εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας) and Thecla without hesitation prays for Falconilla's salvation. The

presence of such an unambiguous prayer for the dead in a work which is indisputably Christian in origin and not gnostic,[73] is obviously of great significance in the history of the development of Christian thought about the departed. For not only does this prayer reflect contemporary belief in a moral differentiation in the afterlife, but it also presupposes the possibility of a change in moral status after death, and in this, it marks a departure from what is known of established Christian thought. Hitherto the writings of the times and the extant prayers of Christians for the departed would seem to have been directed only to the faithful departed and not to pagans. The prayer of Thecla for the unbaptized dead sets a precedent in this respect, one that finds a remarkable parallel ~~through~~ a quarter of a century later in the Passion of St. Perpetua.

St. Perpetua was a twenty-two year old married woman who was martyred with her companions at Carthage in 203. Her sufferings and those of the other martyrs in prison with her, the visions that consoled them, their trial, condemnation and martyrdom are all recorded in a document which came into circulation some seven or so years after their death, and which is now known as the Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis. According to this account, one of the visions which Perpetua had while she was awaiting martyrdom,[74] concerned her brother Dinocrates who had died of cancer at the age of seven.[75] In the vision, Perpetua saw her brother in a subterranean region where there were many dark places. He was foul; the disease which caused his death was still apparent on his cheek, and he was vainly trying to reach the water in a drinking fountain (piscina) above his head. Perpetua took this vision as an exhortation to pray for her brother. Following her prayers she was granted another vision in which she now saw her brother healed from the cancer, and the fountain lowered to his waist so that he was drinking from a cup of gold which never failed. He then ran away to play and Perpetua knew that 'he was translated from his pains',[76] to a place of comfort and refreshment.

The interpretation of this vision is disputed. On the one hand, traditional Catholic theology has seen in it not only a prime example of early Christian prayer for the dead, but also the form of the doctrine of purgatory. However, as A.J. Mason has pointed out,[77] the fact that Dinocrates had apparently died unbaptised and that no word is said to indicate that the child's sufferings were of a cleansing character, does not admit to such a conclusion. Furthermore, as F.J. Dölger has argued in an article published in 1930,[78] the sufferings of Dinocrates were not in fact due to any grave post-baptismal sin, as many of the Fathers (including Augustine) believed, but to the fact that he had died before his time. Or, as E.R. Dodds put it subsequently:

> The dream of Dinocrates' sufferings is based less on Christian pictures of Purgatory than on ancient pagan notions about the thirsty dead and the fate of those who die untimely.[79]

Perpetua's vision reflects not ideas of suffering purgation, but pagan notions of Tartarus, and in this respect, the Apocalypse of Peter provides a suitable parallel.[80] Indeed, it is perhaps significant, as Gerald Bönner has noted,[81] that Perpetua and her companions were catechumens at the time of their arrest and were baptised only a little before their execution. And yet, from the history of the interpretation of this vision, it is apparent that its pagan background must have been quickly forgotten, for it was destined to become of crucial significance in later discussion about the possibility of Purgatory and so to influence the development of Christian theology for centuries to come. In a similar way, Perpetua's prayer for her brother has often been held up as a typical Christian prayer for the departed. However, it should be remembered that Perpetua was a confessor, and therefore her prayers were deemed to have a peculiar potency not ascribable to ordinary Christians - a potency which in later years was similarly to be associated with that of monks and ascetics too![82] Furthermore, if Dinocrates was unbaptised it follows that Perpetua's prayer was in fact, not the norm but a departure from the traditional Christian practice, as it was to become established in succeeding

years, of only commending the souls of the faithful departed to God (though see on this note 82). Yet even if this is so, one cannot but surmise from the evidence of Thecla's prayer and now from that of Perpetua that such practice, although officially frowned upon, was probably not uncommon in the early church, particularly in those areas such as Africa, where strong filial links between the living and the departed were evident.[83] Indeed, it is from African church circles that much of our information about the contemporary Christian understanding of the state of the departed and the growing practice of offering prayers for the dead, is derived.

It is at Carthage that prayers and offerings for the faithful dead seem first to have taken a recognized place in the services of the Church. Whether in North Africa Montanism helped to mature a movement which in other provinces of the Empire was as yet at its beginnings, must remain uncertain; but our knowledge of Carthaginian practice in this matter does come from the later writings of Tertullian (?160-?220) which were composed under Montanistic influence. For example, in his treatise On the Soul (De Anima), Tertullian talks of the dead being, in the interval between death and burial, 'laid to rest by the presbyter's prayer' (cum in pace dormisset et morante adhuc sepulltura interim oratione presbyteri componereutur.[84]) Elsewhere, in his treatise De exhortatione castitatis,[85] he urges as an argument against second marriages that the prayers and annual Eucharists, which affection requires the widower to offer for the soul of a deceased wife, will create an impossible situation if he takes a second. Tertullian argues in a similar vein in another treatise (De Monogamia), stating emphatically that the duties of a Christian widow include that she should 'pray for her husband's soul, and meanwhile beg refreshment for him and a share in the first resurrection and yearly offer sacrifice for him on the anniversary of the day on which he fell asleep.'[86]

It is obvious from the tone of these writings that these latter pronouncements are written from a Montanist standpoint;

but there is no evidence that Tertullian's references to prayers for the dead are distinctively Montanistic, and in the first of the passages quoted above he is evidently describing the ordinary practice of the Christian church. Indeed, he can write in terms which imply that the Eucharist was offered as a matter of common custom at Christian burials and on the anniversaries of a death. For example:

> 'We yearly offer the oblations for the departed on the anniversaries of their deaths.'[87]

In the opinion of H.B. Swete, who lays special weight by the stress which African spirituality laid on the sacrificial character of the Eucharist, it was entirely 'in keeping with its deepened sense of the reality of the Eucharistic commemoration that the Church in North Africa should be the first Christian community, so far as we know, which offered the Eucharist for the benefit of the departed.'[88]

Tertullian would seem to have been similarly emphatic about the state of the faithful departed, the clarity of his thought being in part the result of his concern to oppose current speculative opinion on the matter. One notes the elimination of descriptive material and the total disappearance of apocalyptic imagery.[89] Even the geography of the next world is simplified in the extreme! In all this it is possible to discern three veins in his apologetic which must have given shape and substance to his theology. On the one hand, Tertullian seems to have been concerned to refute the opinions of certain philosophers on the destiny of the soul after death, and to write against those Christians who, perhaps influenced by their views, were now too proud to believe that the souls of the faithful deserve a place in the Underworld, and scorned to believe that they must still look forward, in Abraham's Bosom, to the Resurrection. They held that Christ descended to Hades in order that they might not have to go there, for what difference would there then be between Christians and pagans if the same prison (carcer) awaited them at death? They believed that they would go to Paradise, where the

patriarchs and prophets had already migrated from the Underworld in the retinue of the Lord's Resurrection (appendices dominicae resurrectionis).[90]

Against such Christians, Tertullian upheld the opinion that all souls, good and bad alike, go to the same abode after death. He does not use such words as mansio, receptaculum or locus for this dwelling place, but prefers inferi, 'lower regions', which is in accordance with his emphatic conviction that the souls lived in the underworld. The Apologists as has been seen, did not in general define the location of this abode. But Tertullian, because he was reacting against gnosticism, stressed that the dwelling-place of departed souls was under the earth, in Hades,

> All souls, therefore, are shut up within Hades (inferos): do you admit this? (It is true) whether you say yes or no ... 91

He opposes any notion that Christ by his Descent to Hades had emptied it so that the faithful might not go there at death. He disproves this by reference to the Descent itself and by reference to the vision of St. Perpetua in which only her fellow martyrs enjoy the blessings of Paradise, stating emphatically that 'the sole key to unlock Paradise is your own life's blood.'[92] It is interesting to note how Tertullian, even while maintaining that the souls of all mankind are to be detained in Hades, can at the same time assign to the martyrs the peculiar privilege of being translated at once to Paradise. This is no small indication of the extent to which martyrdom was venerated in the early Church. He writes as follows:

> No-one on becoming absent from the body is at once a dweller in the presence of the Lord, except by the prerogative of martyrdom, whereby he gets a lodging in Paradise, not in Hades.[93]

Quite what Tertullian means by 'Paradise' in this context is open to question. H.M. Luckock, for example, following Tertullian's argument in chapter 55 of his De Anima, identifies it with 'that place in which St. John saw the souls of the martyrs - under

the Altar.'[94] Elsewhere, however, one can find Tertullian offering a broader definition as 'a place of Divine pleasantness appointed to receive the spirits of the saints, separated by a wall or fiery zone from the knowledge of this world.'[95] But then again, one finds him distinguishing Paradise from Heaven:

> How shall the soul mount up to Heaven, where Christ is already sitting at the right hand of the Father, when as yet the archangel's trumpet has not been heard by the command of God? .... To no one is heaven opened; .... when the world indeed shall pass away, then the Kingdom of Heaven shall be opened.[96]

There would thus appear to be some confusion of terminology at this point, but this does not affect Tertullian's general assertion that all departed souls (with the exception of martyrs) are to be located in Hades. This assertion is independent of any dispute over the identity or location of Paradise. Tertullian is constant in his affirmation that just as Christ at his death descended to Hades, and to the souls of the patriarchs, so all men, following his example, must similarly descend, there to await the Resurrection.

Although Tertullian envisages all souls being enclosed within the bounds of Hades, he does insist on a differentiation in the state of the departed during this intermediate period. He describes their abode in the <u>inferi</u> quite systematically, distinguishing between the dwellings of the saved and of the damned. For the latter, the <u>inferi</u> must already be a place of punishment, although this is not the same as gehenna, the great abyss into which they are to be thrown after the resurrection.[97] By contrast, Abraham's Bosom, the dwelling-place of the just in the <u>inferi</u>, is appointed to afford an interim refreshment to the souls of the righteous, until the consummation of all things.[98] Unlike Origen who is to use the term for the place of ultimate blessedness, so that, for him, it is the same as 'heaven', Tertullian reserves 'Abraham's Bosom' as a designation exclusive to the intermediate state. The sense in which it was used by Origen, was, of course, the one which was to eventually

prevail. But Tertullian's position in this question was linked to his controversy with Marcion who held that the souls of Christian Gnostics went directly to a heavenly state, but that the God of the Old Testament sent righteous and wicked alike to Hades. The details contributed by Tertullian to eschatology are thus determined by polemical considerations. For example, he pictures Abraham's Bosom as -

> a temporary receptacle for the souls of the faithful, wherein is even now delineated an image of the future, and where is given some clear foresight of the glory of both judgments.[99]

And again,

> an interval of rest, until the consummation of all things shall complete the resurrection.[100]

Thus, though not in heaven, Abraham's Bosom nevertheless enjoys a high status in the Underworld, acting as a temporary residence for faithful souls, separated from the rest of the _inferi_ only in so far as it was not conceived of as a place of punishment. For in Hades as a whole, it is apparent that Tertullian envisaged there to be punishments and refreshments or consolations (_supplica et refrigeria_),[101] the departed souls anticipating their final state.

Here one finds the third aspect of Tertullian's apologetic appearing, for he was also concerned in his writing to oppose those who, while admitting that all souls went to Hades, denied that they experienced either punishments or refreshments there, as foretastes of eternal bliss or woe, on the grounds that the soul, not yet being clad with a Resurrection body, was insensible to pain or refreshment. In reaction to such opinions, Tertullian argues for the corporeality of the soul, asserting that

> whatever amount of punishment or refreshment the soul tastes in Hades, in its prison or lodging, in the fire or in Abraham's Bosom, it gives proof thereby of its own corporeality. For an incorporeal thing suffers nothing, not having that which makes it capable of suffering; else, if it has such capacity, it must be a bodily substance. For in as far as every corporeal thing is capable of suffering, in so far is that which is capable of suffering also corporeal. 102

The objector thinks that no rewards or inflictions should take place until the flesh is restored to share in them - that flesh which had its share in deserving them. Tertullian argues against this view, for in his opinion, the intermediate state is no sleep of the soul; it is no inaction.[103]

> Will you have it, that nothing is there done whither the whole human race is attracted, and whither all man's expectation is postponed for safe keeping? Do you think this state is a foretaste of judgment, or its actual commencement? A premature encroachment on it, or the first course in its full ministration? Now really, would it not be the highest possible injustice, even in Hades, if all were to be still well with the guilty even there, and not well with the righteous even yet? What would you have hope be still more confused after death? Would you have it mock us still more with uncertain expectation? or shall it now become a review of past life, and an arranging of judgment, with the inevitable feeling of trembling fear?[104]

For Tertullian, it would be an inquissimum otium, that of 'hell', if the wicked were still to be in comfort after death, with the innocent not yet in comfort. Souls in Hades must be sure of their future, and since the body is not indispensable to the sorrows and joys of the soul, the departed experience a foretaste of bliss or woe.

> All souls, therefore, are shut up within Hades; do you admit this? (It is true whether) you say yes or no: moreover, there are already experienced there punishments and consolations .... Why cannot you suppose that the soul undergoes punishment and consolation in Hades in the interval, while it awaits its alternative of judgment, in a certain anticipation either of gloom or of glory?[105]

Thus, the consolations of which Tertullian speaks are the joys of the Elect as they await the glory of the Resurrection. Similarly, the sufferings of which he speaks, are the sufferings of those who are awaiting the condemnation of the Judgment Day. The classes that Tertullian names are not those of the perfect and the imperfect among the saved: they are the saved and the lost (pauperem et divitem). He makes no mention of a suffering for the imperfectly good - a suffering that will end at or before the resurrection. Those who fouentur are those who will be acquitted in the Judgment Day; those who puniuntur are those

who will be condemned. There is, however, one notable exception to this pattern of thought that occurs in the closing lines of his treatise De Anima, where Tertullian states:

> In short, inasmuch as we understand 'the prison' pointed out in the Gospel to be Hades, and as we also interpret 'the uttermost farthing' to mean the very smallest offence which has to be atoned for there before the resurrection, no one will hesitate to believe that the soul undergoes in Hades some compensatory discipline, without prejudice to the full process of the resurrection, when the recompense will be administered through the flesh besides. [106]

The interpretation of this passage is highly debatable,[107] largely because it is the only place in which Tertullian speaks of a pain which is to end, and not to pass on into a worse one. In order to understand the bearings of this one sentence - the only one which touches upon the sufferings of men who will ultimately be saved - it is important to place the passage within the context of the whole treatise, and of Tertullian's doctrine in general. Superficially, language such as 'compensatory discipline' and 'uttermost farthing' is all suggestive of the doctrine of Purgatory. However, in the opinion of J.H. Waszink[108], (and in this, he follows that of A.J. Mason[109]), 'Tertullian does not believe in a purification of the soul after death'. Rather, one is confronted here with an aspect of Tertullian's millenarianism, which in the context of his argument in the treatise, is occasioned only as another way of proving by the case of others that the lost suffer in the intermediate state. If those whose resurrection is delayed, because they have not yet paid the last farthing (no one being admitted into the millennium before he has expiated his sins), are conscious of the restraints of their prison - if, in fact, it is any punishment to have the resurrection postponed - it cannot, he argues, be doubted that the lost are already enduring some torments of the soul, though awaiting greater when the body shall rise to participate in them. This last is his main point - that the torments of the lost begin directly after death. He only incidentally mentions the fact that those of the

Elect who yet had restitution to make due to past sin, could not have part in the first resurrection. A.J. Mason's conclusion is instructive at this point.

> That Tertullian may have conceived of them as undergoing some retributive, rather than purgatorial, pain in the course of this delay, is far from improbable; but there is nothing in the immediate context, or elsewhere in his works, to suggest it. [110]

Tertullian thus neither teaches nor adumbrates a doctrine of Purgatory. His thought although perhaps at times reflective of an African concern with the notion of merit [111] never moves within the strictures of a theory of purgatorial discipline or penal suffering, being more the product of his own systematic and logical way of thinking. However, it should be said that Tertullian in his views about a 'compensatory discipline' which may await some of the Elect, and of the necessity of paying the 'uttermost farthing,' does provide us with one of the earliest patristic references to the possibility of some sort of discipline which the righteous (or some of them) might have to undergo in the After-life. In itself, the reference is of course nothing. It is only tentative and as has been seen, certainly not evidence for a belief in Purgatory. Its importance will only become apparent in retrospect as the number of 'tentative' references to such a discipline increases with the passing of the years.

Such a theological development was in fact already beginning to occur in some parts of the Church. This is apparent from the writings of Clement of Alexandria, who was head of the Catechetical School from 190 to 203, and who wrote roughly contemporaneously with Tertullian. Indeed, with Clement and, more particularly, with Origen who was his successor at Alexandria and who developed his thought, is to be found much of the substance of later Catholic theology on the subject of Purgatory.

The thought of Clement - and of the whole Alexandrian School for that matter - in this sphere was based on a doctrine of ceaseless progress, which once combined with a notion of universal purification, led to a view of the after-life which

allowed for the eventual restoration of all beings in the love of God.[112] But man does not become good simply by nature. In Clement's view man has to learn about goodness and be trained just as in a profession. Perfection in virtue comes not to those who have perfect natures but to those who persevere in training towards a virtuous life. Thus, Clement envisaged the improvement or cure of the individual sinner as a two-fold scheme of education.[113] Sin, in his opinion, arises from ignorance and weakness. These are the results of our willing either not to learn or not to control our passions. Consequently, there are two forms of correction - first, knowledge and clear demonstration from the Scriptures, and secondly, the training of faith and the discipline of fear.

> There are two methods of correction - the instructive and the punitive, which we have called the disciplinary. 114.

Clement lays great emphasis on the disciplinary nature of God's chastisement in order to counteract any thought of divine pettiness. He insists that justice and goodness are not to be thought of as mutually exclusive categories, God's chastisements being not so much punishments as the loving discipline of a father or a teacher. Punishment, for Clement, has overtones of retaliation for past evil and looks back. Chastisement, on the other hand, is positive in connotation: God corrects for the public and private good of those who are corrected. It is a means to glory and looks forward. For ultimately all Christian living has but one aim: to grow like God. The positive implications of Clement's thought are apparent in all his writings. For example:

> Whence at last (on account of the necessity for very great preparation and previous training in order both to hear what is said, and for the composure of life, and for advancing intelligently to a point beyond the righteousness of the law) it is that knowledge is committed to those fit and selected for it. It leads us to the endless and perfect end, teaching us beforehand the future life that we shall lead, according to God, and with gods; After we are freed from all punishment and penalty which we undergo, in consequence of our sins, for salutary discipline. After which redemption the reward and the honours are assigned to those who have become perfect; when they have got done with purification, and ceased from all service, though it be holy service, and among saints. Then become pure in heart, and near to the Lord, there awaits them restoration to everlasting contemplation.[115]

For Clement then, this educative process begins at baptism, moves through enlightenment and knowledge to end in continual prayer. Together with knowledge go purification, freedom from need, freedom from passion, good deeds, love, righteousness, piety and coherence of life. And it is this positive discipline, this purging of sins which leads to perfection, which Clement envisages as existing after death for the purification of the righteous. According to Clement, two categories of sinners are to be distinguished: On the one hand, those who are able to be corrected, and on the other, those who are beyond correction. With regard to the former, it followed that the role of punishment must be that of saving discipline (διδασκαλικός) and with regard to the latter, that of mere chastisement (κολαστικος),[116] though even here, not all hope is excluded. For, in the judgment of Clement, repentance after death was possible; the measure of that possibility being limited more by the free-will of man than by the nature of God. Thus, one finds him asserting that these people who, having repented on their deathbed, have had no time to perform works of penance in this life, will be sanctified in the next. For example:

> It ought to be known, then, that those who fall into sin after baptism are those who are subjected to discipline; for the deeds done before are remitted, and those done after are purged. [117]

And similarly:

> Accordingly the believer, through great discipline, divesting himself of the passions, passes to the mansion which is better than the former one, that is, to the greatest torment, taking with him the characteristic of repentance from the sins he has committed after baptism. He is tortured then still more - not yet or not quite attaining what he sees others to have acquired. Besides, he is also ashamed of his transgressions. The greatest torments, indeed, are assigned to the believer. For God's righteousness is good, and his goodness is righteous.[118]

On such souls then the justice of God will be exercised with mercy and his mercy will exercise itself according to justice.

They will be sanctified (ἁγιάζειν) by a discriminating fire which will at the same time punish the souls of the wicked:

> We say that this fire sanctifies, not the flesh, but the souls of sinners; this fire is not a consumming fire (οὐ τὸ πάμφαγον) like the fire of the forge; it is a discriminating fire (τὸ φρόνιμον), which will penetrate the soul as it passes through it. [119]

The fire which sinful souls endure is thus a beneficial one. Its function is to purify, to test and to sanctify, all of which is necessary 'in order to arrive at the prepared home'[120] by which one assumed Clement refers to the eternal blessedness to which the righteous are destined. In this opinion Clement stands alone in this period; for apart from the tentative suggestions of Tertullian, no other parallel to Clement's thought on this matter can be found. Unlike his contemporary, Clement's opinions would appear to have been formed within the concepts of a developing system of penitential discipline, and in this respect he preludes later theological development. Even so, his theology of the after life was not representative of Christian thought in general at this time and this can be seen from a simple comparison with his Western contemporary, Hippolytus.

The thought of Hippolytus of Rome (c.160-235) - and in this one assumes him to be representative of a tradition of thought in the Roman Church - would seem to have been moulded by inherited Jewish thought, for it is completely traditional in its outlook. In an important fragment of his work <u>On the Universe</u>, addressed to non-Christians, Hippolytus describes how in Hades all souls from the very beginning, good and bad alike, are kept until the Last Day. He writes as follows:

> I must now speak of Hades, in which are confined the souls both of the righteous and of the unrighteous. Hades is a region in creation without form and void, a place below the earth, in which the light of the world does not shine .... This place is assigned as a place of safe-keeping for souls, and over it are appointed Angel-warders, who in accordance with the deeds of each assign to them the temporary punishments of the various localities. In this region is set apart a place, a lake of fire unquenchable, into which we do not suppose that any one has yet been

> cast; but it is prepared for the day predestined by God.[121]

The idea of angels as guards who distribute temporal punishments suitable to each soul's deeds may include some primitive notion of a purgatorial discipline for the righteous, but the fact that they are separated from the damned would seem to point against such an assumption. Hippolytus envisages the righteous in Hades but 'not confined in the same locality as the unrighteous.' In his opinion, there is one way down to Hades, and at its gate stands an archangel with his host and as souls enter -

> the righteous are led to the right, with lights and songs, by the angels set over the various regions, and brought into a place of light, where dwell all the righteous who have lived since the beginning, under no compulsion or restraint, but enjoying continually the contemplation of the good things which they behold, and delighting in looking for the new things that are constantly brought before their eyes, which always seem to be better and better. There is no weariness for them there, no scorching heat, no cold; no thistle grows there; but they have the sight of the ever- smiling countenance of the fathers and the righteous men, who await, what will be given them after they have done with this place, the rest and eternal restoration to life in heaven. This place we call the bosom of Abraham.[123]

And it is precisely this atmosphere of peace and contentment through the victory of Christ, that is reflected in the devotional practice of the Roman Church of this period, as witnessed to by the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus.[124]

For example, in instructions for prayer at the ninth hour, it is said that:

Ethiopic	Arabic	Sahidic
And at the ninth hour they shall be long in prayer, and a prayer with glorifying that ye may join in glorifying with the soul of the righteous ones, glorifying the living God who faileth not, who remembered His righteous ones, and sent to them His Son, that in His Word, to enlighten them.[125]	Prayer at the ninth hour is the pattern of how the souls of the righteous bless the true God, who remembered His holy ones (and) sent to them His Son who is His Word, that He might shine upon them.[126]	that thou mayest know how the soul of the righteous ones bless the Lord, the true God, He, who remembered the holy ones and sent to them His Son who is His Word, to shine upon them.[127]

These instructions clearly envisage the existence of Hades (and some notional belief in the Descent of Christ) and in no way reflect any thought of suffering for the faithful departed. Similarly, in the instructions for prayer at the twelfth hour, at which it is said that all creation praises God, for it was at this hour that Christ vanquished the terrors of Death and darkness, one finds again a joyful atmosphere:

Ethiopic	Arabic	Sahidic
At this hour, therefore, they shall pray carefully, because the presbyters who handed down to us thus instructed us, that at this hour all creation prays to God.	The elders set us the example	The presbyters themselves delivered this work unto us, and they instructed us in this way, because in that hour all creation is quiet for blessing God.
The stars and the plants stand up, and the waters stand up at that hour, and all the hosts of the heavens, the angels, ministering at that hour, with the soul of the righteous, glorify God.[128]	All the ranks of the angels ministering with the souls of the righteous ones, praise God at that hour.[129]	The stars and the trees and the waters are as those who stand up, all the host of the angels offer worship and the souls of the righteous sing hymns to God the Almighty at that hour.[130]

If the Church in Alexandria was 'forward' in its thought about the departed, it would seem from this examination of the writing of Hippolytus that the Church of Rome was intensely traditional in both its theology and its spirituality. Perhaps the only qualification which should be added to this generalisation is that Hippolytus records one of the earliest known requests for prayers to the saints (in the technical sense) which survive in extant Christian literature. It occurs in his Commentary on Daniel[131] and embodies a request to the Jewish martyrs of the Old Testament, the three holy children Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; though some modern scholars treat this as merely rhetorical.[132] Aside from this though, Hippolytus would appear to be entirely traditional.

In summary, it may be said therefore that the situation that presents itself in the Church at the beginning of the third century bears no resemblance to a uniformity of thought. The variegated theological picture which is apparent in every aspect of the Church's life is admittedly in part due to an unbalanced distribution of evidence, but even allowing for this, there is no escaping the divergent opinions of individual authors and the practice of certain 'fringe' customs in some Church circles. The hundred and fifty years since the death of the Apostles had seen the maturation and development of Christian thought about the departed and the establishment of prayer for the dead, developments which were within the New Testament perspective, though couched in the terminology of inherited Jewish and Hellinistic thought; but they had also witnessed a corresponding growth in 'popular opinion' on the subject with the result that in many places, christian theology in some of its aspects bore the influence of pagan thought. Thus it was inevitable that by the close of the second century there should be found in happy (?) co-existence not only the traditional theology of Hippolytus and the more purgative thought of Clement of Alexandria, but also a strong and completely personal devotion to the departed in the North African Church, and a whole gamut of christianised

speculation about the fate of the dead among ordinary Christians.

It was against this background and in this climate of opinion, that subsequent centuries saw a steady systematisation of Christian thought about the life after death, with what had been once only tentative ideas of a purgative discipline transferring from the realm of possibility into that of probability.

CHAPTER THREE

FOOTNOTES

1 So H.B. Swete (following Lightfoot's opinion), 'Prayer for the Departed in the First Four Centures,' JTS 8 (1907) p.500.

2 The Didache (Διδαχὴ Κυρίου διὰ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων) is a short early Christian manual on morals and Church practice. Of its sixteen brief chapters, chapters 1 - 6 describe the 'Two Ways', the 'Way of Life' and the 'Way of Death' and are probably based on a Jewish source(s). Chapters 7 - 15 contain instructions on baptism, fasting, prayer, the Eucharist and how to treat prophets, bishops and deacons. In this section, two eucharistic prayers of an unusual and primitive kind are given. The author, date and place of origin of the Didache are unknown. It is, however, the earliest of the series of 'Church Orders' and forms the basis of the seventh book of the Apostolic Constitutions. Its precise date is unknown. J.P. Audet put it as early as 60, whilst Duchesne put it under Trajan, and therefore not later than 117. J.A. Robinson and R.H. Connolly, however, both put it later. (See further on this: F.E. Vokes, 'The Didache - Still Debated', CQ 3 (1970) pp.57 - 62). It may be of Syrian origin. (English texts - N.B. not in toto: Prayers of the Eucharist : Early and Reformed, ed., Jasper and Cuming, London 1975 pp.14f; A New Eusebius, ed., Stevenson, London 1957, pp.126f.)

3 συναχθήτω σου ἡ ἐκκλησία ἀπὸ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς εἰς τὴν σὴν βασιλείαν .... μνήσθητι, Κύριε, τῆς ἐκκλησίας σου τοῦ ῥύσασθαι αὐτὴν ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ καὶ τελειῶσαι αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου, καὶ σύναξον αὐτὴν .... (Didache IX.4; X.5; AF I p.322f)

4 For a full examination of the importance of Christian burial inscriptions see H.M. Luckock, After Death, London 1880 (2nd ed.,) pp.81 - 102; A.J. MacLean, 'Prayer for the Departed,' ERE X, p.210; H.B. Swete, 'Prayer for the Departed in the First Four Centures,' JTS 8 (1907) p.501ff.

5 Perhaps H.M. Luckock falls into this trap - op.cit., p.90.

6 ibid.

7 Jean Daniélou, The Origins of Latin Christianity, ET London 1977, pp. 26 & 392.

8 ibid. p.26.

9 The name V Esdras is given to the two chapters which precede IV Esdras in the appendix to the Latin translations of the Bible (and which in English versions appear as II Esdras 1 - 2). It is probably a translation of a Greek work dating from the end of the 2nd century (Daniélou p.18).

10 e.g., Barn. XV. 8.

11 ibid. p. 392f.

12 The examples cited are taken from Bettenson ed., Documents of the Christian Church, London 1943, (2nd ed.,) pp.120ff.

13 This monogram frequently occurs in these inscriptions.

14 For a critical appreciation of the evidence see J. Stevenson, A New Eusebius, London 1957, pp.143f. (His dating of the epitaph depends on the identification of Avircius Marcellus with the character described by Eusebius. This identification is generally held to be correct.) See also: Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, pt.ii, London 1889, p.496; Michael Gough, The Early Christians, London 1961, pp.41 - 5, 60, 72, 91 (and also for the photograph of the monument which was discovered by Prof. W.M. Ramsay in 1883, see plate 5, p.215); W.M. Ramsay, Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia, II, pp.722 - 3.

15 English text as given by Stevenson, p.143. The Greek text (which begins with an elegaic couplet and then continues in hexameters) is as follows:

Ἐ]κλεκτῆς πόλ[ε]ως ὁ πολεῖ [της τ]οῦτ' ἐποίη[σα] ζῶν, ἵ]ν' ἔχω [καιρῷ] σώματος ἔνθα θέσιν. Οὔνομ' [Ἀβέρκιος ὁ ὢν] μαθητὴς ποιμένος ἁγνοῦ, ὃς βόσκει προβάτων ἀγέλας ὄρεσιν πεδίοις τε, ὀφθαλμοὺς ὃς ἔχει μεγάλους πάντη καθορόωντας. Οὗτος γὰρ μ' ἐδίδαξε (τὰ Ῥώμης vel τὰ ζωῆς vel θεοῦ τὰ) γράμματα πιστά. εἰς Ῥώμη[ν ὃς ἔπεμψεν] ἐμὲν βασίλ[εἰ ἀναθρῆσαι] καὶ βασιλισ[σαν ἰδεῖν χρυσόσ]τολον χρ[υσοπέδιλον]· λαὸν δ' εἶδον [ἐκεῖ λαμπρὸν] σφραγεῖδ' ἀνέ[χοντα]. Καὶ Συρίης πέ[δον εἶδα] καὶ ἄστεα πά[ντα, Νίσιβιν] Εὐφράτην δια[βὰς πάν] τη δ' ἔσχον συνο[μίλους]. Παῦλον ἔχων ἔπο[χον?] Πίστις [πάντη δὲ προῆγε] καὶ παρέθηκε [τροφὴν] πάντη Ἰχθὺν ἀ[πὸ πηγῆς] παγκαλέθη καθ[αρόν, ὃν] ἐδράξατο παρθ[ένος ἁγνή], καὶ τοῦτον ἐπέ[δωκε φί] λοις ἐσθίειν διὰ παντός], οἶνον χρηστὸν ἔχουσα κέρασμα διδοῦσα μετ' ἄρτου. Ταῦτα παρεστὼς εἶπον Ἀβέρκιος ὧδε γραφῆναι, ἑβδομηκοστὸν ἔτος καὶ δεύτερον ἦγον ἀληθῶς. Ταῦθ' ὁ νοῶν εὔχαιτο ὑπὲρ Ἀβερκίου πᾶς ὁ συνῳδός. Οὐ μέντοι τύμβῳ τις ἐμῷ ἑτερόν τινα θήσει· εἰ δ' οὖν, Ῥωμαίων τα[μ]είῳ θήσε[ι] διοχείλια [χ]ρυσᾶ καὶ [χ[ρηστὴ] πατρίδι Ἱεροπόλει [χ]είλια χρυσᾶ. (Enchiridion Fontium Historiae Ecclesiasticae Antiquae ed. Conradus Kirch, 8th ed., ed. by L. Veding, Freiburg in Breisgau : Herder 1960, n.155 p.93).

16 Several well-known verses contained in the Roman litury are quotations or adaptations from V Esdras; in particular Lux perpetua luceat eis, 'Let perpetual light shine on them' and Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, 'Eternal rest grant to them Lord' both of which occur in the Mass for the dead according to the Roman rite.

17 I Thes. 4 : 13.

18 On this subject see: Garrett Barden, 'Study of the Ritual Representation of Death,' Concilium 4 (1974), pp. 54 - 63; Jean Daniélou, 'La doctrine de la mort chez les Pères de l'Eglise' in Le mystère de la mort et sa célèbration, Lex orandi xii (Paris 1951), pp. 134 - 163; J.G. Davies, 'Burial in the early Church,' art. Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship, ed., by same, London 1972, pp. 96 - 7; H. Van Der Meer, Augustine the Bishop, ET London 1961, pp.498 - 502; A.D. Nock, 'Cremation and Burial in the Roman Empire,' HTR 25 (1932), pp.321 - 359; H.J. Rose, Ancient Roman Religion, London; H.B. Swete, Services and Service Books, London 1925, p.162ff; Christopher Walter, 'Death in Byzantine Iconography,' ECR viii (1976), pp.114f., 119f., and 123; Rowell, The Liturgy of Christian Burial, London 1977, pp. 19 - 30.

19 Apart from this basically historical consideration, the relative importance which one puts upon Christian funerary custom for an understanding of the Christian conception of the state of the departed will to a great extent depend upon one's anthropological viewpoint. Robert Hertz, for example, in his essay of 1907 (for a discussion of this see Barden, op. cit., p.54) was the first to draw attention to the universality of the idea that the dead are in some way still present among the living until, by appropriate rites, they are finally cut off and sent to the community of the dead. This idea has three important consequences for an interpretation of funerary customs. First, it involves the idea that death is more than putrefaction and decay and so allows for a differentiation between human and non-human death. Secondly, it implies that the human person, in spite of death, is in some sense continuous. Finally, it involves the representation of the place of the dead and hence the opposition between the place of the living and that of the dead.

It would follow on this understanding that initially the funeral rite would have evolved as a means of sending the dead finally away. Certainly in ancient Roman religion, it was never doubted that the dead or the power of the world of the dead could influence the world of the living. Thus when a death occurred, the household was for the time being in a state of tabu or ill-luck (funesta), and consequently observed a period of mourning. And the first and most obvious step to get rid of this undesirable state was to transfer the departed from the world of the living to that which was now his proper abode, the realm of the 'good people' (manes). (For more details

on this see H.J. Rose, op. cit., pp.46f.) And even though the community may not be interested in the place to which the spirit goes; none the less, the mere fact that a 'place' is now present in their cosmogony means that it is henceforth available for further development. In the words of Barden, 'the ritual presents the place of the spirit and so becomes a way of knowledge which includes within itself a demand for its development'. (op.cit., p.55)

This much granted, with the community coming to concentrate on the welfare of the dead, the whole emphasis of the funeral rite should shift away from sending the dead away to a progression in existence. This shift, it would be contended, is seen in the expansion of the description of the abode of the dead. Whereas before it was merely a place, now it is a place with its own time. And when ritual expands the description of the place and time of the dead, over against the world of the living, the world of the dead appears as survival over against transcience.

Such an anthropological understanding of the development and meaning of funeral rites although not without points of contention (for example, recent research into African religion and 'ancestor worship' has called into question some elements of accepted theories - see J.V. Taylor, The Primal Vision, London, 1963) has met with the general assent of scholarship, and if applied to the pattern of Christian ritual representation of death, it cannot but have repercussions in the realm of theology and any understanding of Christian thought about the departed. Clearly the theory in its initial presuppositions about the origin of funeral rites immediately breaks down in relation to known Christian practice where notions of sending the dead away would be in complete contradiction to Christian belief in Christ's victory over the power of death, and to the doctrine of the communion of Saints. Fear, and need to be freed from the dead, are just not characteristic of Christian practice. Love, joy and union with the departed characterise the Christian attitude.

This caveat aside though, the theory would seem to be possible as applied to the subsequent development of Christian funeral custom, particularly when one contrasts the rites of the early church with medieval ceremonial (see T.S.R. Boase, Death in the Middle Ages, London 1972), and to the symbiotic relationship of ritual to theology. Given this, it must follow that if a full understanding of the Christian view of the state of the departed is to be established, attention must be given not just to theological treatises, but also to developing devotions, both private and public, both orthodox and 'extra-curricular'.

20 The history of the contemporary pagan practice is confused and open to varied interpretation. (For a full discussion of the problems, see A.D. Nock, op.cit., pp.321 - 359) In the last century of the Roman republic both burial and cremation seem to be

familiar. Burial, however, was held to be the older custom. Cremation was the normal practice though (see Lucretius iii. 888 ff.). In the first century after Christ ashes of the dead of lower classes were provided for in communal repositories, each ash-urn occupying a niche or columbarium. For those of larger means, the characteristic monument was the Lippus, or grave-altar, with a receptacle for the ashes. The richest built mausolea. All alike, except those influenced by Pythagoreanism (see Nock, p.335) were normally cremated. By the time of Hadrian, however, one finds a complete change. No more columbaria were built. Burial was normative (again?).

The cause of this change has been much discussed and the explanation has often been given that it was due to religious influences and to a shift in ideas of the hereafter. The rising influence of Christianity has sometimes been suggested as a cause, but according to Nock (p.321), chronology and the distribution of the phenomena are 'fatal to that supposition.' More recently an alternative has been sought in the growth of the mystery religions. The fact that the change began with the moneyed classes certainly could be interpreted in this sense, for it was they who would first be affected by new speculative concepts, and they also who could afford to be initiated into this or that mystery.

However, as Nock points out (p.331), there 'are many such changes of funerary custom which can hardly be connected with a shift of ideas.' And the mixture of burial and cremation in the same chamber, which is noted at Rome, Alexandria, and Weiden, and for which Nock cites numerous analogies elsewhere, indicates that no fundamental difference was held to exist between the two procedures. And the modes of honouring the dead person are commonly the same under both customs: libation-tubes have been found for both ash-urns and for burials.

Thus, Nock concludes (p.357) that the 'change from cremation to burial was simply one of fashion ... It cannot be explained as due to the Eastern mystery religions, nor again to the older Dionysiac rites, nor to Pythagoreanism, and it is almost certain that it is not due to any general alteration in ideas on the afterlife; there is no indication of any such alteration.'

21 Minucius Felix in his dialogue represents the pagan interlocutor as mocking at the Christian doctrine of the future life and saying, 'That of course is why they abominate pyres and condemn the disposal of the dead by fire, just as though everybody, though saved from the flames, did not with years and generations pass into earth.' The Christian replies, 'We do not, as you believe, fear any loss arising from the way of disposing of the body, but we practice the old and better custom of burial.' This implies that a normal pagan could see no objection to cremation. Had it been otherwise, Minucius

would hardly have failed to make capital out of the fact that heathen superstition on the matter existed. It may be remarked that in his rejoinder, Minucius does not base the case against cremation on belief in the resurrection of the body. Christian practice, in the words of A.D. Nock was 'in the first place a following of Jewish custom, hallowed by the burial of Jesus, and in Judaea burial was universal long before there was any thought of a resurrection.' (op.cit., pp.334f.)

22 The notion that Roman funerals occurred at night has been seriously challenged by H.J. Rose: 'fire was a necessary thing, for all funeral processions carried torches, not, as some have suggested because originally funerals were always at night, a proposition which has no real proof, but because fire or light or both are regular forms of protection against ill luck and bad influences.' (op.cit., p.47.)

23 H.B. Swete, Services and Service Books, London, 1925. p.163. See for example: Acta Proconsularia S. Cypriani, 5, Eusebius, Vita Constantini, IV. 66; Gregory of Nyssa, Vita S. Macrinae, ad fin.

24 Information gleaned from various sources provides insights into the pattern of the Christian funeral. For example Tertullian (de Anima. 51) says that the clergy offered prayer around the body during which a last kiss of peace was given. From Augustine (Confessions ix.12) it would appear that the night which intervened between death and interment was brightened by psalmody and that before the dead was committed to the tomb, the Eucharist was offered for him.

On the basis of this and other information, J.G. Davies (op.cit., p.96) has suggested five main items of the Christian funeral which were probably beginning to emerge in the second century.

a) Prayer in the house: the corpse would be washed and anointed and swathed in white linen to the accompaniment of prayers, following Jewish practice.

b) Procession to the grave.

c) Funeral Office: a short service of extempore praise and thanksgiving around the body, probably including Bible readings and psalms.

d) Eucharist: the celebration expressed the belief in the communion that still existed between the living and the dead. During this the kiss of peace would have been given to the corpse.

e) Interment: the corpse was placed in the grave.

Quite when it became normative practice for the Eucharist to be celebrated at the grave side is disputed by scholars.

Many think this is more likely to have emerged later when the Eucharist replaced(?) the agape at the tomb in an effort to stamp out pagan practice. However, one notes that in the Lucian Acts of John the Apostle is represented as celebrating the Eucharist at a tomb on the third day after death - τῇ δὲ ἑξῆς ἡμέρας ἐώθεν.... παραγίνεται εἰς τὸ μνῆμα τρίτην ἡμέραν ἐχούσης τῆς Δρουσιανῆς, ὅπως ἄρτον κλάσωσιν ἐκεῖ.

See below note 26 and later discussion. See also Quasten, '"Vetus superstitio et nova religio" - The Problem of Refrigerium in the Ancient Church of North Africa,' HTR 33 (1940) pp.253 - 66.

25 Mart. Polyc. XVIII 2, 3. translation by Jackson as amended by Stevenson, A New Eusebius, London, 1957, p. 24. The relevant part of the Greek text reads: ἔνθα ὡς δυνατὸν, ἡμῖν συναγομένοις ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ χαρᾷ παρέξει ὁ κύριος ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν τοῦ μαρτυρίου αὐτοῦ ἡμέραν γενέθλιον, εἴς τε τὴν τοῦ προηθληκότος μνήμην καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἀσκησίν τε καὶ ἑτοιμασίαν. (AF II, p. 336)

26 Whether the commemoration of martyrs arose simply from the spontaneous reverence of the Christian community uninfluenced by pagan custom is uncertain. In Ancient Roman custom, there was a period of strict mourning for the dead concluded by the novendiale sacrificium, the offering of the ninth day, after which the dead person had his portion in the annual Feast of Souls (Parentalia, festival of parents, and so of ancestors generally), held in February. Certainly Christian practice as established by the third and fourth centuries, saw the recital of psalms, hymns and prayers on the third, ninth and fortieth days after internment in the East, and on the third, seventh and fortieth days in the West (but on this development see, Rowell op.cit., p.18). It is also interesting to note perhaps another influence of pagan thought in the Roman liturgical calendar of 354 which designates the entries of the martyrs' feasts no longer as 'birthdays' but as 'burials' (depositiones). The earthly, not the heavenly, event is now the object of the liturgical celebration; time and earthly history, not eternity, have become the primary interest of the calendar. The commemoration of martyrs however, is a complex phenomenon and specific problems relating to it will be dealt with in Chapter 5.

27 See H.B. Swete, ' Prayer for the Departed in the First Four Centures,' JTS (1907) p.501.

28 G. Gardner, 'The New Testament and Prayers for the Departed', CQR 83 (1916) p.28.

29 Daniélou has written: 'Confronted with competition on the part of the Jews, Latin Judaeo - Christians were simultaneously

exposed to persecution by the pagan world. Later, at the time of Tertullian the Christian message faced the encounter with Greek culture. Before this took place, however, the clash was simply between Christianity, which was still basically Jewish in culture, and pagan society; and this found expression particularly in various Judaeo-Christian writings dealing with martyrdom or with the conflict with pagan morality.' (The Origins of Latin Christianity, ET London 1977, p.59).

30 A. Michel commenting on the preliminary developments in the 2nd. century writes: 'Au IIme siècle, la conception du scheôl judaique s'est trouvée presque naturellement transposée dans la théologie chrétienne, tout en subissant de notables perfectionnements. La croyance à la proximité de la parousie aidait d'ailleurs singulièrement à cette transposition. Le Christ devait revenir bientôt; pendant ce temps, que feraient les âmes déjà separées de leur corps? L'unique perspective réunissant à la fois l'expiation et le jugement n'étant pas dédoublée, il s'ensuivait que l'état des âmes séparées était un état d'attente, dans le bonheur ou le malheur déjà entrevu du jugement final. A la différence des âmes du scheôl, ce sont des âmes vivantes, capables de joie ou de souffrance, ayant déjà reçu comme un accompli de leur misère ou de leur félicité futures.' A. Michel and M. Jugie., 'Purgatoire' art., DTC., VIII (i)1191.

31 On the date of the Apocalypse of Peter, see E. Hennecke, New Testament Apocrypha, II ET, London, 1964. p. 664. for text of Apoc. see pp. 668 - 683.

32 The origin of the stock of ideas embodied in the Apoc. of Peter is disputed. Some scholars see them uniformly in the Orphic - Pythagorean mysteries. This may be, broadly speaking, true in the case of the description of Hell, but in the opinion of Maurer, the ideas of the last judgement, the resurrection of the dead, of the destruction of the world by fire etc., are to be traced back through the medium of Jewish Apocalyptic (the Book of Enoch, the Apoc. of Zephaniah, Wisdom of Solomon etc.,) to oriental origins. See E. Hennecke, p. 667.

33 In this respect the Apoc. of Peter represents the first in a whole tradition of thought, a tradition which ultimately climaxes in Dante's Divina Commedia. MacCulloch has commented: 'The Apocalypse of Peter is a direct forerunner of Dante's great poem, in the division of the different classes of sinners, in the variety and horror of the punishments, in the attempt to make the punishments appropriate to the crime, and in the picture of Paradise. Dante may not have known the Apocalypse itself, but the framework of his poem comes from other visions which were influenced by it.' J.A. MacCulloch, Early Christian Visions of the Other-World, Edinburgh, 1912. p.15.

34 Apocalypse of Peter. Akhmin text 5.

35 ibid. 13.

36 ibid. 15f. (Ethiopic text. 16f.)

37 ibid. 21.

38 ibid. 22 (Eth.7).

39 ibid. 25 (Eth.23).

40 ibid. 31 (Eth. 10).

41 ibid. 26. According to the Ethiopic text (Eth.8) the children are given over to the charge of an Angel of Temlakos (Tartarus?) yet even here they still suffer the same fate virtually.

42 Apocalypse of Paul 40 (Hennecke, p.784). It is interesting to note how even within about fifty years of the circulation of the Petrine Apocalypse reworking was already taking place. Clement of Alexandria quotes it but envisages the angel of Tartarus as a 'care-taking' angel and the children eventually passing into a 'better abode': 'For example, Peter in the Apocalypse says that the children born abortively receive the better part. These are delivered to a care-taking (temelouchos) angel, so that after they have reached knowledge they may obtain the better abode, as if they had suffered what they would have suffered, had they attained to bodily life. But the others shall obtain salvation only as people who have suffered wrong and experienced mercy, and shall exist without torment, having received this as their reward. But the milk of the mothers which flows from their breasts and congeals, says Peter in the Apocalypse, shall beget tiny flesh-eating beasts and they shall run all over them and devour them - which teaches that the punishments will come to pass by reason of the sins.' (Clement of Alexandria, Ecl., 48f.)

43 To this extent the Apologetic movement has quite rightly been termed 'the birthplace of a developed Christian theology' (Paul Tillich, A History of Christian Thought, London 1968, p.24). The Apologists represent a serious attempt on behalf of the Church to articulate and communicate its faith in language and concepts acceptable to its opponents. A broad spectrum of the Christian faith consequently finds expression in their writings but not all

aspects receive the same measure or depth of attention. Eschatological themes find exposition, but references to the departed, their state and needs, and the question of prayer for the dead are at best secondary, the subjects not being primary points of contention or matters central to creedal articulation. This point is underestimated by some scholars such as Charles Wright (The Intermediate State and Prayers for the Dead, London 1900) who blandly concludes that because there is no evidence (or at least, no unequivocal evidence) of the period, therefore the early Church must have known nothing of an intermediate state or prayers for the departed (pp.205f).

44 Like many of his contemporaries, Justin was not without millenarian opinions. See L.W. Barnard, Justin Martyr, His Life and Thought, Cambridge 1967, pp. 163-6; E.R. Goodenough, The Theology of Justin Martyr, Amsterdam 1968, pp.279-91.

45 I Apol. XII.

46 οἷς κἂν ὁμοίως ἡμᾶς ἀποδέξασθε, οὐχ ἧττον ἐκείνων θεῷ πιστεύον-τας ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον, οἳ καὶ τὰ νεκρούμενα καὶ εἰς γῆν βαλλόμενα πάλιν ἀπολήψεσθαι ἑαυτῶν σώματα προσδοκῶμεν, ἀδύνατον μηδὲν εἶναι θεῷ λέγοντες. (I Apol. XVIII; CAC I 58.)

47 Εἰ γὰρ καὶ συνεβάλετε ὑμεῖς τισὶ λεγομένοις Χριστιανοῖς, καὶ τοῦτο μὴ ὁμολογοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ βλασφημεῖν τολμῶσι τὸν θεὸν Ἀβραὰμ καὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἰσαὰκ καὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἰακώβ, οἳ καὶ λέγουσι μὴ εἶναι νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν, ἀλλὰ ἅμα τῷ ἀποθνήσκειν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, μὴ ὑπολάβητε αὐτοὺς Χριστιανούς. (Dial. Tryph., 80; CAC I 290.)

48 This presumably reflects the traditional view that Hades was divided into two parts according to the destiny of the departed (see DTC idid., 1191). Certainly when Justin accuses the Jews of having fraudulently removed from the Book of Jeremiah a prophecy which stated that 'The Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, remembered his dead people of Israel who slept in the sepulchre, and descended to them with the glad tidings of salvation' (Dial. Tryph.,72), he implies no belief in a transference of souls from Hades as a result of the Descent and Christ's preaching his salvation to them. In fact the same apocryphal prophecy is twice referred to by Irenaeus. (Adv. Haer, III 20.4; IV 22.1).

49 Justin, I Ap. 18.

50 I Ap. 21.

51 I Ap. 1.

52 ibid.

53 I Ap. 8.

54 Several of Irenaeus' writings have been lost, but his Epideixis, or 'Demonstration', a work on the apostolic preaching has been recovered in an Armenian translation. This work first explains the Christian teaching and then proves it from prophecy. It was intended as a handbook of apologetics for the use of the faithful. An earlier but far more important work, the Refutation of the False Gnosis (c.185), generally known as the Adversus Haereses, has been preserved entire in a rather literal Latin translation. It is divided into five books, the first two of which are devoted to an exposure of the Gnostic heresy, chiefly that of the Valentinian school; the second two to constructive teaching based upon the canonical scriptures; and the final one to an explanation of the resurrection and the Last Things.

55 Only a few fragments of gnostic works have survived. Some longer writings in Coptic have survived, notably those called Pistis Sophia (c.150). Although far from showing Gnosticism at its best, they do have an interest of their own in their descriptions of the Other-World.

56 As far as can be gathered from the writings dealing with the Gnostics, it may be said in general that they maintained that they alone would pass after death to the Pleroma, the region of light where the invisible Father is, beyond the spheres of the heavens. But the spirit, passing through these spheres, would meet with determined opposition from their rulers. Those who had the true gnosis, or who had passed through the requisite initiations, would traverse the spheres unscathed. In some cases, however, there seems to have been a certain belief in a species of purgatorial detention in the spheres, or again souls remained for a time above the spheres in a region intermediate between them and the Pleroma. Some Gnostics allowed a lesser bliss than the highest to souls who had faith only, but generally speaking they were indifferent to their fate, and seem to have believed in a state of extinction for all but themselves.

An important and early example of gnostic thinking is found in Pistis Sophia (c. 150). The revelations of Pistis Sophia

(which are supposed to have been given by our Lord to the disciples after his resurrection and again after his ascension) only vaguely describes the Kingdom of Light whither the souls of the perfect pass. Of much greater interest is the account of the places of punishment or of purification. Above the earth is a region called the way of the Mist, ruled by five rulers called Paraphex, Ariouth, Hecate, Typhon and Iaxthanabus. Each rules over a number of demons, and they are the tempters of souls to sin, as well as their tormentors after death on account of these sins. Each sinner passes a greater or lesser time in this state (of punishment), but are finally, at a favourable conjunction of the planets rescued and 'led into the sphere'. But below the earth there are three more regions of still more terrible punishment. These are Amenti - ruled by Ariel; Chaos, ruled by Ialdabaoth; and the Outer Darkness. Amenti and Chaos are regions of fire and smoke, and to them are assigned the souls of slanderers, thieves etc. After due chastisement they eventually pass into the Way of the Mist, and from thence after further punishment, they are finally brought to heaven. Only murderers, blasphemers and certain others incapable of redemption, are flung into the Outer Darkness until the great day of judgment, when they perish and are dissolved. Hearing of all these terrors, Mary Magdalene is pictured as desiring to know whether none can escape from it. The Saviour then reveals that if the 'Mystery of the ineffable which remits sins' be celebrated, and prayer made for the soul, it will escape and inherit the Kingdom of Light.

This latter point is important evidence of the establishment of prayer for the departed in some gnostic circles. To what extent this emphasis on deliverance from suffering through the intercession of the living was found in Catholic circles is uncertain. Certainly, all the evidence points to this being a purely gnostic phenomenon at this stage, though with the turn of the century, the influence of such practice on Christian practice is beginning to appear, e.g. Passio Perpetuae (c.220.). With regard to the general picture of the Life after death, on the whole it may be said that the terrors of the Gnostic Other-World were quite as gruesome as those of more orthodox places of punishment, though the details are less complete. What surprises one most is the conception that Gnostics could be sinners, capable of dread torments in the Other-World, when it is normally understood that the Gnostic usually prided himself on the prospect of immediate entrance to bliss after being set free from the prison of the body.

Gnosticism is a vast subject and its influence on Christian thought too complex for further discussion. Therefore, for an evaluation of Gnostic speculation on the state of the departed, see J.A. MacCulloch, Early Christian Visions of the Other World, Edinburgh 1912, pp.49-56.

57 Adversus Haereses V 31.1.

58 ibid., V.31.2. The only exception Irenaeus made to this was the case of martyrs whom he believed went straight to heaven. The position of the Old Testament saints in this connection was ambiguous. According to Irenaeus, Christ awakened and raised them (excitavit et erexit), yet immediately after he says that they are to be raised from sleep at the Second Coming before the rest (i.e. dead Christians). Christ will awaken both them and the rest, who will be judged, and will give them a part in his Kingdom. The only difference between the Old Testament saints and dead christians is that the latter will be judged. In view of this does the first excitavit et erexit refer to Christ's preaching, enlightening and baptizing in Hades but not to a removal hence? It ~~they~~ must refer to some change of condition, signifying a removal from Hades, or from its state of gloom. Where the saints were removed to is not certain. Not to heaven, for that would not be in keeping with Irenaeus's chiliastic beliefs. Probably, it refers to the 'invisible place' again.

59 ibid., ii.34.1.

60 ibid., V.36.1. This final Paradise is perhaps the same as the Paradise from which Adam was 'cast out into this world'. Though it was planted 'eastward in Eden' it is apparently in the third Heaven, or it is an earthly paradise heightened and removed from earth.

61 G. Bornkamm, in E. Hennecke, New Testament Apocrypha, II. E.T. London 1965, p.427.

62 in an unpublished lecture entitled, 'The Extinction of Paganism and the Church Historian'.

63 ibid.

64 For text and commentary on this work, see Hennecke, op.cit., pp.188-258.

65 op.cit., pp.259-321.

66 op.cit., pp.322-389.

67 op.cit., pp.425-531. Also J.A. MacCulloch, Early Christian Visions of the Other World, Edinburgh, 1912, pp.29f.

68 W.H. Shewring, The Passion of St. Perpetua and St.Felicity, London, 1931. For commentary on work see esp.,: J. Daniélou, The Origins of Latin Christianity, E.T. London, 1977, pp.59-62; E.R. Dodds, Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety, Cambridge, 1965. p.52f; F.J. Dölger, 'Antikeparallelen zum leidenden Dinocrates in der Passio Perpetuae,' Antike und Christentum, II. fasc.1., Munster 1932; J.A. MacCulloch, Early Christian Visions of the Other World, Edinburgh, 1912. pp.185f; A. Michel and AA. Jungie, art., 'Purgatoire', D.T.C. VIII(i) 1213.

69 A passage of Tertullian in his work De Anima c.9. is instructive in showing whence the dreamers derived the stuff of their dreams. Speaking of the public reading of the scriptures in Church, he says it afforded materials for visions to a certain inspired Montanist sister. There can be little doubt that Christians who were constantly brooding over the current conceptions of the Other-World, would occasionally see visions of paradise or hell, since dreams are so often derived from our waking thoughts and experiences.

70 τῇ δὲ ἑξῆς ἡμέρας ἐώθεν... παραγίνεται εἰς τὸ μνῆμα τρίτην ἡμέραν ἐχούσης τῆς Δρουσιανῆς, ὅπως ἄρτον κλάσωσιν ἐκεῖ.

Acts of John. 72. (Hennecke, op.cit., p.248)

71 The full weight of this evidence will not be discussed until later when the thought of Augustine and the problems of the exclusion of pagan practice will be gone into.

72 The full text reads:

> "And after the procession Tryphaena took her again; for her daughter who was dead had spoken to her in a dream: 'Mother, thou shalt have in my place the stranger, the desolate Thecla, that she may pray for me and I be translated to the place of the just.' So when Tryphaena received her back from the procession she was at once sorrowful, because she was to fight with the beasts on the following day, but at the same time loved her dearly like her own daughter Falconilla; and she said: 'Thecla, my second chid, come and pray for my chid, that she may live; for this I saw in my dream.' And she without delay lifted up her voice and said: 'Thou God of heaven, Son of the Most High, grant to her according to her wish, that her daughter Falconilla may live for ever!"
> Acts of Paul 28, 29. See Hennecke, op.cit., p.361.

73 According to the testimony of Tertullian the author of the Acts of Paul (which incorporates the Acts of Paul and Thecla) was a presbyter in Asia Minor, who was rewarded for his work by deposition from his office but not apparently by expulsion

from the Church. This we can understand, according to Schneemelcher (see Hennecke, op.cit., p.351), apart from the obvious sin of forgery, if we bear in mind the theological tendencies - which are really not heretical - but on the other hand observe what offence must have been occasioned on a more rigorous examination by certain particular traits in the Acts of Paul. We need recall only Thecla's baptism of herself and the baptized lion, for example. Whether prayer for the pagan dead can be associated with such stranger tenets of belief is disputable. Certainly no Father of the early Church supported such practice and it is perhaps best to assume it to have been the practice of a minority. Whether or not this was the case, the 'good intentions' of the author of the work cannot be doubted, for in so doing he wished to help his Church in the struggle against the heretics.

74 Perpetua's first vision (for which she had prayed) was of a narrow ladder of gold stretching heavenwards. At its foot was a dragon, while round its steps were cruel hooks and knives ready to hurt the careless in their ascent. Perpetua saw her fellow Christian Saturus mount the ladder in safety and invite her to follow. Summoning up courage, she overcame the dragon in the name of Christ and trod on its head. Having mounted she gained the top in safety and reached a large garden. There she saw a white-haired shepherd surrounded by myriads of white-robed forms. He was milking the sheep. Welcoming Perpetua, he gave her a piece of cheese, which she took with joined hands. The white-robed company said 'Amen' and at this she awoke, with a sweet taste remaining in her mouth. This vision, when told to her fellow-prisoners, was interpreted as meaning that there would be no escape from her suffering (see Passio Perpetuae.4).

Perpetua's Paradise is in the skies, the Heavenly Garden which is the final state of bliss - open even now to martyrs. The Shepherd (Christ) and the sheep (the blessed) recall our Lord's description of Himself as the Good Shepherd - a simile which the early Church delighted in, as is proved by the numerous representations in the catacombs. Jacob's ladder is perhaps responsible for the ladder of the vision but it may have been suggested by the conception of the ascent of the soul through the spheres - a belief current mainly in Gnostic circles, but occasionally in more orthodox circles, (see MacCulloch, op.cit., p.21). That this conception may have been known to Perpetua is confirmed by the presence of the dragon since we know that among the dangers which the ascending soul encountered was a dragon, which could be quelled by various means, some of them magical.

75 The full text of the vision of Dinocrates is as follows:

A few days after, while we were all praying, suddenly in the midst of the prayer I uttered a word and named Dinocrates; and I was amazed because he had never come into my mind save then; and I sorrowed, remembering his fate. And straightway I knew that I was worthy, and that I ought to ask for him. And I began to pray for him long, and to groan unto the Lord. Forthwith the same night, this was shown me.

I beheld Dinocrates coming forth from a dark place, where were many others also; being both hot and thirsty, his raiment foul, his colour pale; and the wound on his face which he had when he died. This Dinocrates had been my brother in the flesh, seven years old, who being diseased with ulcers of the face had come to a horrible death, so that his death was abominated of all men. For him therefore I had made my prayer; and between him and me was a great gulf, so that either might not go to other. There was moreover, in the same place where Dinocrates was, a font full of water, having its edge higher than was the boy's stature; and Dinocrates stretched up as though to drink. I was sorry that the font had water in it, and yet for the height of the edge he might not drink.

And I awoke, and I knew that my brother was in travail. Yet I was confident I should ease his travail; and I prayed for him every day till we passed over into the camp prison. (For it was in the camp games that we were to fight; and the time was the feast of Geta Caesar.) And I made supplication for him day and night with groans and tears, that he might be given me.

On the day when we abode in the stocks, this was shown me. I saw that place which I had before seen, and Dinocrates clean of body, finely clothed, in comfort; and the font I had seen before, the edge of it being drawn down to the boy's navel; and he drew water thence which flowed without ceasing. And on the edge was a golden cup full of water; and Dinocrates came up and began to drink therefrom; which cup failed not. And being satisfied he departed away from the water and began to play as children will, joyfully.

And I awoke. Then I understood that he was translated from his pains.

Passio Perpetuae. 7, 8. (Shewring's translation. pp.28 ff.) For Latin text see, Shewring, pp.9 ff.

76 Tunc intellexi translatum eum esse de poena. (Passio Perpetuae 8.)

77 A.J. Mason, Purgatory, the State of the Faithful Departed, and the Invocation of the Saints, London, 1901, p.23.

78 F.J. Dölger, (see n.62), as quoted by Gerald Bonner in an unpublished lecture entitled, 'The Extinction of Paganism and the Church Historian.' In this, Dölger is opposed by Tixeront, Histoire des dogmas, (8th. ed.). See on this A. Michel and A.A. Jungie, DTC.

79 E.R. Dodds, Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety, Cambridge, 1965. p.52.

80 See earlier and esp. notes 41 and 42.

81 Gerald Bonner, ibid.

82 On the way in which martyrs and monks came to be closely correlated see Chapter 5 and particularly n84. With regard to the prayer of Perpetua and the fact that it was deemed to have special efficacy in virtue of her being a confessor, and moreover that it was offered for someone who was unbaptised, one finds an ~~incredibly~~ remarkably good parallel in The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, The Alphabetical Collection, tr. Benedicta Ward, London 1975, (p.115, saying 38), which describes an incident involving Macarius the Great. I record the text in full because it is noteworthy.

> Abba Macarius said, 'Walking in the desert one day, I found the skull of a dead man, lying on the ground. As I was moving it with my stick, the skull spoke to me. I said to it, "Who are you?" The skull replied, "I was high priest of the idols and of the pagans who dwelt in this place; but you are Macarius, the Spirit-bearer. Whenever you take pity on those who are in torments, and pray for them, they feel a little respite."' The old man said to him, "What is this alleviation, and what is this torment?" He said to him, 'As far as the sky is removed from the earth, so great is the fire beneath us. We ourselves are standing in the midst of the fire, from the feet up to the head. It is not possible to see anyone face to face, but the face of one is fixed to the back of another. Yet when you pray for us, each of us can see the other's face a little. Such is our respite.' The old man in tears said, 'Alas the day when that man was born!' He said to the skull, 'Are there any punishments which are more painful than this?' The skull said to him, 'There is a more grievous punishment down below us.' The old man said, 'Who are the people down there?' The skull said to him: 'We have received a little mercy

> since we did not know God, but those who knew God and denied Him are down below us.' Then, picking up the skull, the old man buried it.

Whilst this is not an exact parallel - for example, there is no indication that the Abba's prayers will eventually procure the transfer of these souls to eternal bliss (though this is not explicitly denied) - nevertheless, many factors are to be seen as common: the respite of torment, the intercession for the unbaptised (did Abba Macarius regularly pray for the unbaptised dead?), and the efficacy of the prayer of a confessor/monk.

83 John V. Taylor in the chapter entitled 'The Tender Bridge' of his book The Primal Vision (London 1963), in which he describes the African understanding of the dead, indicates how with the evangelisation of Central Africa in the last 150 years, a similar situation to that which occurred in North Africa in the early church, is arising today. For the African, the family is a single continuing unit, and he is conscious of no radical distinction of being between the living and the dead (p.155). The christian African cannot disinherit the ties he feels towards his pagan ancestors, and by praying for them in the context of the new christian family of which he is also a part, he is able to offer a genuine love for his dead relatives, (pp.168f.). Prayer for the dead in this respect provides a natural but necessary channel for devotion: 'Surely the "tender bridge" that joins the living and the dead in Christ is prayer. Mutual intercession is the life-blood of the fellowship and what is there in a Christian's death that can possibly check its flow? To ask for the prayers of others in this life, and to know that they rely on mine, does not show any lack of faith in the all sufficiency of God. Then, in the same faith, let me ask for their prayers still, and offer mine for them, even when death has divided us. They pray for me, I may believe, with clearer understanding, but I for them in ignorance, though still with love; And love, not knowledge, is the substance of prayer .... But must such communion be limited to the Christian dead? That must remain a crucial question for Africa .... we dare not dogmatise in such a realm. Yet I believe the question is very closely linked with the one - must the Christian be extracted from the solidarity of man? I have ventured to suggest that the relationship of the New Mankind to the Old is one of excruciating tension but not of separation. If that is true at all it must be true of the whole organism, the dead as well as the living .... The words, "In Adam all ..." include the whole family of man in death, the promise, "In Christ all ... " cannot include less than that in life. The genealogies in the Gospel linking Christ himself with the unnumbered myriads of the dead are a symbol of the unbroken cord with which God will finally draw Adam back to Paradise.

The Christian's link with his pagan ancestors, in remembrance and unceasing intercession may be part of that ultimate redemption.' (pp.168-71.)

84 De Anima 51; (C.C.II,857) (whether this constituted a liturgical act is disputable).

85 Duae uxores eundem circumstant maritum, una spiritu, alia in carne; neque enim pristinam poteris odisse, cui etiam religiosiorem reservas affectum ut iam receptae apud Dominum, pro cuius spiritu postulas, pro qua oblationes annuas reddis. Stabis ergo ad Dominum cum tot uxoribus quot in oratione commemoras, et offeres pro duabus et commendabis illas duas per sacerdotem. (De exhortatione castitis XI 1; CC, II 1031).

86 De Monogamia 10. One can see here the influence of millenarian opinions. For discussion of this aspect of Tertullian's thought, See Daniélou, The Origins of Latin Christianity, E.T. London 1977, pp.144f.

87 Oblationes pro defunctis, pro nataliciis annua die facimus (De Cor. III CC., II 1043). Later Tertullian continues as follows: Harum et aliarum eiusmodi disciplinarum si legem expostules scripturarum, nullam leges. Traditio tibi praetendetur auctrix, consuetudo confirmatrix, et fides observatrix. (ibid.)

88 H.B. Swete, 'Prayer for the Departed in the First Four Centuries,' JTS 8 (1907), p.504.

89 Following the observations of Finé, Die Terminologie der Jenseitvorstellungen bei Tertullian, Bonn 1958, p. 187, and Daniélou, op. cit., p.142, the latter of whom sees it as part of Tertullian's reaction to Judaeo-Christianity (see pp.149 and 158).

90 See De Anima 55; CC II 862.

91 Omnis ergo anima penes inferos? inquis. Velis ac nolis... (ibid, 58; CC II 867.)

92 Tota paradisi clavis tuus sanguis est. (ibid., 55; CC II 863.)

93 Nemo enim peregrinatus a corpore statim immoratur penes dominum, nisi ex martyrii praerogativa, Paradiso scilicet, non inferis deversurus. (De Resurr. Mort., XLIII; CC,II 978).

94 H.M. Luckock, After Death, London 1880, p.221; cf. Daniélou, op.cit., pp.393f.

95 Apol. 47.

96 Quo ergo animam exhalabis in caelum Christo illic adhuc sedente ad dexteram patris, nondum dei iussi per tubam archangeli audito ..... Nulli patet caelum terra adhuc salva .... cum transactione enim mundi reserabuntur regna caelorum. (De Anima 55; CC II 862.)

97 The same view will be found in Hippolytus, but, since it is met with so frequently in all apocalyptic writing, it is not necessary to say that Tertullian influenced Hippolytus in this case.

98 See De Anima 7, 55, 58; De Resurr. Mort., XVII; De Jejunis 16.

99 temporale aliquod animarum fidelium receptaculum, in quo iam delinietur futuri imago ac candida quaedam utriusque iudicii prospiciatur? (Adv. Marcionem IV. 34; CC.I 638.)

100 Interim refrigerium praebituram animabus iustorum donec consummatio rerum resurrectionem omnium plenitudine mercedis expungat. (ibid.)

101 Tertullian employs a number of terms to describe the state of happiness which the just enjoy after death. The first of these is solatium, which denotes consolation or comfort, with the added nuances of foretaste and reward. A second term used by Tertullian is requies, rest; and he seems to have been the first Christian author to apply this word specifically to the state of the souls of the just before the resurrection (see p.66f.). Tertullian also uses a third word, refrigerium, which was applied in secular usage to the idea of a cool drink and everything covered by rest and refreshment, including bathing, meals and relaxation in games. N.B. The term in caelis in Tertullian always denotes not the intermediate state but the eschatological blessedness of heaven.

102 Igitur si quid tormenti sive solacii anima praecerpit in carcere seu deversorio infernum, in igni vel in sinu Abrahae, probata erit corporalitas animae. Incorporalitas enim nihil patitur, non habens per quod pati possit; aut si habet, hoc erit corpus. In quantum enim omne corporale passibile est, in tantum quod passibile est corporale est. (De Anima 7; CC II 790.)

103 See De Anima 58.

104 Aut nihil vis agi illic, quo universa humanitas trahitur, quo spes omnis sequestratur? Delibari putas iudicium an incipi? Praecipitari an praeministrari? Iam vero quam iniquissimum otium apud inferos, si et nocentibus adhuc illic bene est et innocentibus nondum! Quid amplius vis esse post mortem confusa spe et incerta expectatione ludentem an vitae recensum iam et ordinationem iudicii inhorrentem? (De Anima 58; CC II 868)

105 Omnis ergo anima penes inferos? inquis. Velis ac nolis, et supplicia iam illic et refregeria ... Cur enim non putes animam et puniri et foueri in inferis interim sub expectatione utriusque iudicii in quadam usurpatione et candida eius? (ibid., CC II 867)

106 In summa, cum carcerem illum, quem evangelium demonstrat, inferos intellegimus et novissimum quadrantem modicum quoque delictum mora resurrectionis illic luendum interpretamur, nemo dubitabit animam aliquid pensare penes inferos salva resurrectionis plenitudine per carnem quoque. (ibid., CC II 868; cf. De Anima 35.)

107 For an appraisal of the various interpretations of this passage see J.H. Waszink, Tertullianus De Anima, Amsterdam, 1947. pp.591 ff.

108 Waszink, p. 592.

109 A.J. Mason, 'Tertullian and Purgatory,' JTS 3 (1902) pp.598-601.

110 Mason, op. cit., p.600.

111 In Tertullian one finds the fundamental conceptions of 'satisfaction' and 'merit': both words apply to penance. 'Satisfaction' is the compensation which a man makes for his fault. Thus, Tertullian can write: 'How absurd it is to leave the penance unperformed, and yet expect forgiveness of sins! What is it but to fail to pay the price, and, nevertheless, to stretch out the hand for the benefit? The Lord has ordained that forgiveness is to be granted for this price: He wills that the remission of the penalty is to be purchased for the payment which penance makes.' (De Poenitentia, 6.) Thus Penance is satisfaction, the acceptance of a temporal penalty to escape eternal loss. The idea of Merit is associated with the performance of that which is commanded, the observance of Law; and if

such observance in general is 'meritorious', in its special sense the term is applied to acts which are '<u>supererogatoria</u>', going beyond what is strictly of obligation; this covers, according to Tertullian, fasting, voluntary celibacy, martyrdom, and so forth. It is possible, therefore, for men to earn an abundance of merit. The idea that such superfluous merit can be transferred from one person to another is not found in Tertullian, though it does occur in Cyprian (see later). For the way in which these ideas become moulded into a full post-baptismal framework and so come to affect thought about life after death, see latter (esp. Chap.5). For a full discussion of this aspect of Tertullian's thought see: <u>DTC ibid.</u>, 1213; Kenneth Kirk, 'Tertullian's Theory of Penance' in <u>The Vision of God</u>, London, 1931, pp.514-7; James Morgan, <u>The Importance of Tertullian</u> (for influence of legal conceptions on his mind).

112 <u>DTC ibid.</u>, 1192. The doctrine of <u>apokatastasis</u> becomes more prominent in Origen.

113 <u>Stromateis</u> VII. 10.

114 Δύο δὲ καὶ [οἱ] τρόποι τῆς ἐπανορθώσεως. ὁ μὲν διδασκαλικός, ὅ δὲ κολαστικός, ὃν καὶ παιδευτικὸν εἰρήκαμεν. (<u>Stromateis</u> IV. 24; <u>DGCS</u> LII 316)

115 ὅθεν ἐπὶ τέλει ἡ γνῶσις παραδίδοσαι τοῖς εἰς τοῦτο ἐπιτηδείοις καὶ ἐγκρίτοις διὰ τὸ πλείονος παρασκευῆς καὶ προγυμνασίας δεῖσθαι καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἀκούειν τῶν λεγομένων καὶ εἰς καταστολὴν βίου καὶ εἰς τὸ ἐπὶ πλέον τῆς κατὰ νόμον δικαιοσύνης κατ' ἐπίτασιν προεληλυθέναι. αὕτη πρὸς τέλος ἄγει τὸ ἀτελεύτητον καὶ τέλειον, προδιδάσκουσα τὴν ἐσομένην ἡμῖν κατὰ τὸν θεὸν μετὰ θεῶν δίαιταν, ἀπολυθέντων ἡμῶν κολάσεως καὶ τιμωρίας ἁπάσης, ἃς ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων εἰς παιδείαν ὑπομένομεν σωτήριον. μεθ' ἣν ἀπολύτρωσιν τὸ γέρας καὶ αἱ τιμαὶ τελειωθεῖσιν ἀποδίδονται, πεπαυμένοις μὲν τῆς καθάρσεως, πεπαυμένοις δὲ καὶ λειτουργίας τῆς ἄλλης, κἂν ἁγία ᾖ καὶ ἐν ἁγίοις. ἔπειτα καθαροὺς τῇ καρδίᾳ γενομένους κατὰ τὸ προσεχὲς τοῦ Κυρίου προσμένει τῇ θεωρίᾳ τῇ ἀιδίῳ ἀποκατάστασις. (<u>Stromateis</u> VII. 10; <u>DGCS</u> XVII 41)

116 <u>Stromateis</u> IV. 24.

117 ἰστέον μέντοι τοὺς μετὰ τὸ λουτρὸν τοῖς ἁμαρτήμασι περιπίπτοντας τούτους εἶναι τοὺς παιδευομένους. τὰ μὲν γὰρ προενεργηθέντα ἀφείθη, τὰ δὲ ἐπιγινόμενα ἐκκαθαίρεται. (<u>Stromateis</u> IV 24; <u>DGCS</u> LII 316)

118 Διὰ πολλῆς τοίνυν τῆς παιδείας ἀπεκδυσάμενος τὰ πάθη ὁ πιστὸς ἡμῖν μέτεισιν ἐπὶ τὴν βελτίονα τῆς προτέρας μονῆς, μεγίστην κόλασιν ἐπιφερόμενος τὸ ἰδίωμα τῆς μετανοίας ὧν ἐξήμαρτεν μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα. ἀνιᾶται γοῦν ἔτι μᾶλλον ἤτοι μηδέπω ἢ καὶ μηδ' ὅλως τυγχάνων ὧν ἄλλους ὁρᾷ μετειληφότας. πρὸς δὲ καὶ ἐπαισχύνεται τοῖς πεπραγμεληθεῖσιν αὐτῷ, εἰ δὴ μέγισται κολάσεις εἰσὶ τῷ πιστῷ. ἀγαθὴ γὰρ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη καὶ δικαία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγαθότης αὐτοῦ. (Stromateis VI. 14; DGCS LII 486.)

This passage and many already quoted reflect the influence of platonism on the thought of Clement. For a discussion of this see: N.E.G.Floyd, Clement of Alexandria's Treatment of the Problem of Evil, Oxford 1971; S.R. Lilla, Clement of Alexandria : A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism, Oxford 1971; John Patrick, Clement of Alexandria, London 1914, pp. 34-64.

119 φαμὲν δ' ἡμεῖς ἁγιάζειν τὸ πῦρ οὐ τὰ κρέα, ἀλλὰ τὰς ἁμαρτωλοὺς ψυχάς, πῦρ οὐ τὸ παμφάγον καὶ βάναυσον, ἀλλὰ τὸ φρόνιμον λέγοντες, τὸ διακνούμενον διὰ ψυχῆς τῆς διερχομένης τὸ πῦρ. (Stromateis VII. 6; DGCS XVII 27.)

120 Stromateis VI. 14.

121 Περὶ δὲ ᾅδου, ἐν ᾧ συνέχονται ψυχαὶ δικαίων τε καὶ ἀδίκων, ἀναγκαῖον εἰπεῖν. Ὁ ᾅδης τόπος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ κτίσει ἀκατασκεύαστος, χωρίον ὑπόγειον ἐν ᾧ φῶς κόσμου οὐκ ἐπιλάμπει ... Τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ὡς φρούριον ἀπενεμήθη ψυχαῖς, 'εφ' ᾧ κατεστάθησαν ἄγγελοι φρουροί, πρὸς τὰς ἑκάστων πράξεις διανέμοντες τὰς τῶν τόπων προσκαίρους κολάσεις. Ἐν τούτῳ δὲ τῷ χωρίῳ τόπος ἀφώρισταί τις, λίμνη πυρὸς ἀσβέστου, ἐν ᾧ μὲν οὐδέπω τινὰ καταῤῥεῖφθαι ὑπειλήφαμεν, ἐσκευάσται δὲ εἰς τὴν προωρισμένην ἡμέραν ὑπὸ θεοῦ. (Adv.Plat., De Causa Univ., 1; PG X 795.)

122 Οἱ δίκαιοι ἐν τῷ ᾅδῃ νῦν μὲν συνέχονται, ἀλλ' οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ τόπῳ, ᾧ καὶ οἱ ἄδικοι. (ibid; PG X 797.)

123 ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν δίκαιοι εἰς δεξιὰ φωταγωγούμενοι, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐφεστώτων κατὰ τόπον ἀγγέλων ὑμνούμενοι, ἄγονται εἰς χωρίον φωτεινόν. ἐν ᾧ οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς δίκαιοι πολιτεύονται, οὐχ ὑπ' ἀνάγκης κρατούμενοι, ἀλλὰ τῆς τῶν ὁρωμένων ἀγαθῶν θέας ἀεὶ ἀπολαύοντες, καὶ τῇ τῶν ἑκάστοτε καινῶν προσδοκίᾳ ἡδόμενοι κἀκεῖνα τούτων βελτίω ἡγούμενοι. Οἷς ὁ τόπος οὐ καματηφόρος γίνεται. οὐ καύσων, οὐ κρύος, οὐ τρίβολος ἐν αὐτῷ, ἀλλ' ἡ τῶν πατέρων δικαίων τε ὁρωμένη ὄψις πάντοτε μεθδιᾷ, ἀναμενόντων τὴν μετὰ τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ἀνάπαυσιν καὶ αἰωνίαν ἀναβίωσιν ἐν οὐρανῷ. Τούτῳ δὲ ὄνομα κικλήσκομεν κόλπον Ἀβραάμ. (ibid., PG X 797.)

124 The Apostolic Tradition, formerly known as the Egyptian Church Order, is now generally held to be the work of Hippolytus. The treatise is apparently referred to in the words περὶ χαρισμάτων ἀποστολικὴ παράδοσις which occur in the list of writings attributed to Hippolytus on the statue of him preserved in the Vatican Library. (The credit for establishing its authorship belongs to R.H. Connolly, "The So-Called Egyptian Church Order and Derived Documents', in Texts and Studies, ed.,J.Armitage Robinson, vol.viii 4. Cambridge 1916, (and also, but quite independently to Edward Schwartz in 1910). The treatise contains a detailed description of rites and practices presumably in use at Rome in the early third century. The main source for the text is a Latin codex but it survives also in Coptic (Sahidic and Bohairic), Ethiopic and Arabic translations. On this work were based others which are really redactions of it, of different dates: the Testament of Our Lord (c.350), and thus, bk.vii. of the Apostolic Constitutions (c.375), and later the so-called Canons of Hippolytus which is of uncertain date but which may be as late as 500. see further: B.Botte, La Tradition Apostolique de Saint Hippolyte 1972; Gregory Dix, The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus (1968, ed.H.Chadwick); Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, London 1945, pp.157-162; R.H. Connolly, 'The Eucharistic Prayer of Hippolytus', JTS, 39 (1938), pp.350-369; J.A. Jungmann, The Early Liturgy, ET London, 1960, pp.52-73, Prayers of the Eucharist : Early and Reformed, ed., Jasper & Cuming, London 1975, pp. 21-25.

125 R.H.Connolly, in Texts and Studies, p.97; quoting The Statutes of the Apostles or Canones Ecclesiastici, ed., with translations from Ethiopic and Arabic MSS, by Z. Horner, London, 1904, p.183.

126 ibid p.264 of Horner.

127 J.A. MacCulloch, The Harrowing of Hell, Edinburgh 1930, p.75. quoting Z. Horner, op.cit., p.329.

128 R.H. Connolly, op.cit., p.99; quoting Horner p.184.

129 ibid. p.264 of Horner.

130 J.A. MacCulloch, op. cit., p.81; quoting Horner. p.330.

131 Hippolytus, Commentary on Daniel, II.30.

132 For discussion see Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, London, 1945, p.346.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE THOUGHT OF THE EAST FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE 3RD CENTURY TO THE CLOSE OF THE 6TH CENTURY

a) EARLY 3RD CENTURY THOUGHT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ORIGEN

The emergence of the Apologetic movement in the middle of the second century had resulted in Christian theology entering upon a new, more mature phase. One aspect of this move to systematisation is to be seen in the realm of Christian eschatology, where although the general pattern of established Christian thought remained largely unaltered, all the key ideas which formed part of it being accepted without question, new emphases and fresh lines of thought were beginning to appear partly, as has been noted, for apologetic motives, and partly as the result of growing speculation. The clash with Judaism and Paganism made it imperative to set out the bases of the revealed dogmas more thoroughly, while Gnostic tendencies toward the dissolution of Christian eschatology into the myth of the soul's ascent and return to God had to be resisted. On the other hand, millenarianism, the theory that Christ after the Second Coming would reign on earth for a thousand years, was beginning to find increasing support among Christian teachers. The year 203, however, saw a fresh departure in Christian theology, with the succession of Origen (c.185-254) as head of the Catechetical School in Alexandria.

While theologians such as Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Hippolytus had been content to elaborate familiar eschatological themes, Origen was concerned to develop the doctrine of deification (θέωσις), and to develop it in relation to the philosophical framework of platonism.[1] In this respect his theology is distinctively individualistic. Indeed it is without real parallel in the East. In accordance with his view, the final flowering of the Christian hope consisted in participation in the divine nature and in the blessed immortality of God, and inevitably, such an understanding (and particularly at the lengths to which Origen was content to push his interpretation of eschatology) had considerable repercussions

in his theology of the afterlife and his exposition of the nature and purpose of an intermediate state.

In his treatment of the judgment, although he believed that it would be enacted at the end of the world when there would be a definite separation between good and bad,[2] Origen also seems to have accepted the belief in a provisional separation between souls immediately after death.[3] On death all men pass into an intermediate state which prepares them for their eternal destinies.

> I think that all the saints who depart from this life will remain in some place situated on the earth, which Holy Scripture calls Paradise, as in some place of instruction, and, so to speak, class-room or school of souls, in which they are to be instructed regarding all the things which they had seen on earth, and are to receive also some information respecting things that are to follow in the future.[4]

From this passage it is clear that Origen envisaged the intermediate state as a sort of probationary school (auditorio vel schola animarum) in which souls receive instruction on all things even on earth and presumably on the life of the future to which they are destined,[5] and that he identified this state with the Paradise of the Bible, locating it in an unknown part of the earth.[6] It is also apparent that he believed that following due instruction, which may be of longer or shorter duration, souls would ascend to an aerial region, and so through the sphere of the Heavens and would eventually come to be united with Christ. Thus he writes:

> If any one indeed be pure in heart, and holy in mind, and more practised in perception, he will, by making more rapid progress, quickly ascend to a place in the air, and reach the kingdom of heaven, through those mansions, so to speak, in the various places which the Greeks have termed spheres, that is globes, but which Holy Scripture has called heavens; in each of which he will first see clearly what is done there, and in the second place, will discover the reason why things are so done: and thus he will in order pass through all gradations, following Him who hath passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, who said, "I will that where I am, these may be also." And of this diversity of places He speaks, when He says, "In my Father's house are many mansions."[7]

It is interesting to note in passing the way in which Origen's thought at this point is based not on the doctrine of Christ's descent into Hades, but on his ascent into heaven and particularly, it would seem, as it is expounded by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (He.4:14). Obviously, Origen's thought and language is moulded by middle platonism (indeed, the Epistle to the Hebrews is not without platonic influence!) but it is not out of keeping with the general biblical perspective. For example, on the one hand he can maintain the eschatological perspective of the New Testament by insisting that all the faithful must await their consummation of bliss till the fulness of time. The perfection of joy in union with Christ does not occur till the Last Day when God will be all in all.[8]

> Not even the Apostles have yet received their joy, but even they are waiting, in order that I too may become a partaker of their joy. For the saints departing hence do not immediately receive all the rewards of their deserts; but they wait even for us, though we be loitering and dilatory. For they have not perfect joy as long as they grieve for our errors or mourn for our sins.[9]

Yet, on the other hand, even if perfection still lies in the future, Origen can at the same time maintain in his theology of spiritual progress, the Pauline notion of 'departing to be with Christ' because on his understanding Christ is 'everywhere, and passes swiftly through all things'.[10]

On a more general point, however, it should be emphasised that Origen's notion of the spiritual progress of the soul in the after-life is not a simple accommodation of a platonic concept to certain biblical assertions, but rather a particular application and extension of his entire theology of the spiritual life,[11] which itself represents the fusion of the biblical assertion that man was created in the image of God (κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ θεοῦ) and the platonic idea that man's perfection depends on his likeness to God. This fusion of ideas which is also present in the theology of Clement of Alexandria,[12] led to the evolution of a complex ideological system which was based upon the view that since God

created man in his own image, man's real being must, therefore, be his inner being, his spiritual being, which in a sense partakes of the nature of God. Moreover, since man is also involved in the life of the senses, which is foreign to his essence, he loses God's image insofar as he allows himself to be moulded to the pattern of the animal life. It followed, therefore, for Origen, that the spiritual life consisted of the process by which man recovers his true nature.

> God deals with souls not in view of the fifty years, so to speak, of our life here, but in view of the endless world. He has made our intellectual nature immortal and akin to himself, and the rational soul is not shut out from healing, as if this life were all.[13]

The spiritual life was begun on earth as soon as the soul realized the dignity that belonged to it as God's image and understood that the real world was the interior. Thus, although the deification or θέωσις of the creature can be realized in its fullness only in the age to come, the deifying union has, nevertheless, to be fulfilled ever more and more even in this present life, through the transformation of man's corruptible and depraved nature and by its adaptation to eternal life. This way of union which for Origen is the essence of the Christian life, consequently involved different stages of growth, which in later catholic theology come to be designated by the terms 'purgative', 'illuminative' and 'unitive',[14] and it is this pattern which Origen envisaged as being applicable to the life after death.

Thus it followed for Origen that the intermediate state to which one was introduced at death could simultaneously be a time of illumination for some but of purgation for others, depending upon an individual's spiritual maturity. For the righteous, the life after death would be experienced in terms of illumination, hence Origen's designation of it as <u>auditorium vel schola animarum</u> (though one notes that even the most perfect christians seem to have to undergo some sort of purgation in the hereafter).

> For my part I believe that even after the resurrection from the dead we shall need a cleansing and purifying

> sacrament (for no one will be able to rise without stain) and that no soul can be found that will at once be free from all faults.[15]

It would appear that if penitence is the beginning of the spiritual life, this is not equivalent to saying that it is a passing moment, a stage to be left behind. According to Origen it is not merely a stage but a condition which must in some sense continue permanently, the constant attitude of those who truly aspire to union with God. The fact that a man is being deified does not mean that he ceases to be conscious of sin. On the contrary, deification always presupposes a continued act of repentance. A saint may be well advanced in the way of holiness, yet he does not therefore cease to employ the words of the prayer of the publican - 'Lord, have mercy on me a sinner.' This prayer will accompany the just man even to the gates of the Kingdom! Having said this, however, it is equally clear that for sinners, death can only lead to punishment. Thus Origen can write as follows:

> As I believe we all must needs come to that fire. Even a Paul or a Peter comes to that fire. But to such as they it is said, "Though thou pass through the fire, the flames shall not kindle upon thee." If, however, it be a sinner like me, he shall come to the fire like Paul and Peter, but he shall not pass through it like Paul and Peter.[16]

Yet punishment is not eternal in Origen's view. It is rather purgative in its purpose and therefore temporal in its duration. The justice of God is always remedial, not vindictive. As Origen states in one of his homilies, 'God is good and merciful. If enforcing penalties against sinners were not useful for their conversion, He would never requite sins with punishment.'[17] Punishment is, thus, regarded as something essentially positive, as something educational in nature, which will in due course lead to the conversion of the sinner and his eventual salvation. For example, Origen can write as follows:

> Now I think that another species of punishment may be understood to exist; for just as, when the limbs of the body are loosened and torn away from their respective connexions, we feel an intense

> and excruciating pain, so when the soul is found apart from that order and connexion and harmony in which it was created by God for good action and useful experience and not at concord with itself in the connexion of its rational movements, it must be supposed to bear the penalty due to its unstable and disordered condition. But when the soul, thus torn and rent assunder, has been tried by the application of fire, it is undoubtedly brought into a condition of stronger inward connexion and renewal.[18]

And similarly:

> Every sinner kindles the flame of his own fire, and is plunged in no fire that is kindled by another, or that was already in existence. The fuel and food of this fire are our sins, which the Apostle Paul called "wood, hay and stubble". When the soul has amassed a multitude of evil works and abundance of sins, all that collection of evil becomes hot for torment, and is set on fire for punishment for as long a time as may be required, when by the power of God the mind or conscience is made to remember all the things of which in sinning it had imprinted upon itself the marks and outlines, each foul and shameful action or ungodly deed, and shall come to see spread out before its eyes the history of its own iniquities. Then the conscience is lashed and pricked with its own goads, and becomes it own accuser and witness against itself. ... There are many things which are hidden from us, and are known only to him who is the Physician of our souls .... God, our Physician, willing to dispel the diseases of our souls, which they had gathered by divers sins and transgressions, uses penal remedies, and applies even the torment of fire to those who have lost the soul's health.[19]

Origen, like Clement of Alexandria before him, draws no distinction between this fire and the fire of hell, simply because, for Origen, the real punishment of the wicked consisted in their own interior anguish, their sense of separation from the God who should be their supreme good. And since such punishment was remedial, according to Origen, it would seem that in the end God's patient love must succeed in making all his creatures weary of their unfaithfulness. The most stubborn will eventually give in and consent to love him. But in Origen's opinion there will be no victory unless there is free submission. The only thing that can give God glory is that

all created spirits should freely acknowledge his excellence and love him for it.[20] The end of the creature is the glory of God and his own perfection; and as God has the whole of time at his disposal, he pursues that end throughout all the aeons in the Pentecost of years. The time will come when God is all in all (I Cor.15:28); all creatures with freewill will have returned to him and his rule will be universal. The whole creation will thus be restored to its original integrity.[21] This is Origen's doctrine of apocatastasis[22] in which his thought about the life after death and his eschatology, indeed his whole theological system, culminates.

In view of the fact that Origen's entire thought about the state of the departed is rooted in his spirituality (there being no fallacious division between the two into mutually exclusive categories,) it is not surprising to find in his writings references to the significance of prayer in relation to the Christian dead. Indeed, the continuity of life after death with present existence, together with a doctrine of spiritual progress, made it inevitable that Origen should find the coinherence of the community of faith expressed in the reality of prayer. Interestingly enough, however, Origen's main concern in this field is not with the offering of prayer for the departed by the living, about which he is relatively silent,[23] but rather with the prayer of the departed themselves for those on earth.[24] In his treatise On Prayer Origen, taking as a starting-point St. Paul's words, I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, says:

> It is not improper to offer supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving to saints; and two of these, I mean intercession and thanksgiving - not only to saints, but to mere men, but supplication to saints only, if only Peter or Paul can be found, that they may help us, making us worthy to enjoy the licence which was granted to them of forgiving sins.[25]

On the ground of the general structure of the passage and of a

statement made elsewhere by Origen that

> every supplication and prayer and intercession and thanksgiving is to be sent up to the supreme God through the High Priest, who is above all the angels, the living Word and God, [26]

the 'saints' referred to have been interpreted by some writers to be living saints.[27] However, any ambiguity of interpretation is removed when one considers two other notable passages from his homilies:

> It will not be out of place to say that all the saints who have departed this life, still retaining their love for those who are in the world, concern themselves for their salvation, and aid them by their prayers and mediation with God. For it is written in the Book of Maccabees thus:
> 'This is Jeremias the prophet of God, who always prays for the people.' [28]

Again:

> It is my opinion that all those fathers who have fallen asleep before us, fight on our side and aid us by their prayers, for so also I heard one of the old masters say. [29]

These passages betray no doubt in Origen's mind concerning his belief that Christians who have been active in prayer in this life, and who after death remain united with the Church on earth in a common worship of the one Father, do not cease upon dying to pray for those who remain. That he approved and advocated the practice of the specific invocation of the departed saints in prayer is more open to question. Apart from the obvious difficulty of trying to argue from a general belief in the reciprocity of prayer to the particular belief in the propriety of making <u>specific</u> requests to the departed,[30] one cannot help but also be influenced by the fact that no evidence for such practice exists (outside the one possible reference in Hippolytus) even in the writings of Tertullian, [31] and although the custom becomes frequent towards the end of the third century, nowhere does Origen actually commend the practice. Indeed, he distinctly testifies that the assistance of the saints comes unsought. The favour of the supreme

God alone, he says, is to be cultivated; but when we gain his favour, just as the shadow moves with the motion of the body, so we gain the favour also of 'all the friends of God, angels and souls and spirits' and 'when we pray to God, ten thousand holy powers pray with us uninvoked'.[32] Nevertheless, the fact that Origen gives credence to the view that prayer is both an expression and an instrument of community and solidarity in Christ, cannot be ignored. As such it represents an important stage in the development of Christian theology but more significantly, it illustrates the way in which theology and spirituality have always been closely integrated in the Christian tradition of thought about the departed. Reference to this fact has already been made[33] but its significance has seldom been appreciated, particularly in expositions of the Eastern tradition, in which, as Vladimir Lossky repeatedly emphasises, 'there is a deep and indissoluble bond between theology and mysticism, between doctrinal tradition and spirituality,' it being impossible 'to expound spirituality otherwise than in a dogmatic form, dogma being its outward expression, the only objective evidence of an experience which the Church affirms.'[34]

b) LITURGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE EAST TO A.D.400

The fifty years following the death of Origen in 254 offers little evidence to indicate the way in which thought about the departed was developing in the East during the period. The year 249 saw the start of the Decian persecution and successive decades saw even more severe persecution under Diocletion and Galerius, and in this atmosphere, much of the dialogue between Christianity and Pagonism ceased, or at best in 'popular' circles, degenerated more into invective than rational argument. Of the liturgy of the Eastern Church, however, during the third century there is some evidence, but it is confined to surviving fragments of the Didascalia Apostolorum and the Anaphora of Saints Addai and Mari.

With regard to the Anaphora of Saints Addai and Mari[35] it is more than probable that this liturgy originated in Edessa, a city of north-eastern Syria near the frontier between the Empire and Persia, and one of the earliest centres of Christianity. After the Council of Ephesus (431) the area became Nestorian, and was subsequently occupied by the Arabs. These two circumstances, as Jasper and Cuming point out,[36] kept the liturgy relatively free from Byzantine influence; and though in a developed form it is still in use today, it is likely that its oldest parts go back to the third century. Towards the end of the prayer (which would appear to contain neither an institution narrative nor even an authentic epiclesis) the following passage occurs:

> You, Lord, through your many mercies which cannot be told, be graciously mindful of all the pious and righteous fathers who were pleasing in your sight, in the commemoration of the body and blood of your Christ, which we offer to you on the pure and holy altar, as you taught us; and grant us your tranquillity and your peace for all the days of this age.[37]

The interpretation of this passage is difficult. To what extent it may be said to constitute an intimation of a belief in the prevailing efficacy of the prayers of the faithful

departed (who in the context of the Anaphora would seem to include all those 'who have been sealed with the living seal of holy baptism') is highly questionable. At best the prayer represents only a tentative reference to such a belief and should probably be accorded no more significance than the passing reference of Hippolytus,[38] in this case testifying more to the Eastern emphasis upon the eucharistic commemoration as that mystery in which all the faithful, living and departed, participate, ~~as~~ than anything else. Of greater significance, however, ~~is that of~~ are some of the surviving fragments of the Didascalia Apostolorum.

The author of the Didascalia Apostolorum[39], or to give its full (Syriac) title, The Catholic Teaching of the Twelve Apostles and holy Disciples of our Redeemer, was probably a physician who had been converted from Judaism. Like the Anaphora of Saints Addai and Mari, the work seems to have been composed in North Syria in about the middle of the third century.[40] The relevant passage reads as follows:

> In making commemoration, you will be both having readings of Holy Scripture and also offering prayers to God unceasingly; and according to the fashion of the royal body of Christ, you offer the royal eucharist not only when you are gathered together, but also in the cemeteries; and in the rites of those who are asleep, setting out earthly bread made by fire and consecrated by invocation, you offer in prayer without distinction for those who are asleep.[41]

Historically, this evidence is important because hitherto, as has already been noted, apart from the evidence of inscriptions on Christian graves no absolutely certain evidence for the existence of prayer for the dead is to be found outside the Province of Africa.[42] Furthermore, it is apparent that although the references to the Eucharist in the Didascalia are slight and incidental, mention is made of gatherings held in the cemeteries at the graves of the departed in addition to the regular synaxes or gatherings for worship in the churches. At these it would appear that scriptures were read, prayers were

offered, and the Eucharist celebrated. The writer speaks of 'offering for those that are asleep', and also mentions celebrations of the Eucharist in connection with their decease.[43] This pattern of worship closely corresponds to what has already been outlined in the previous chapter concerning the form of Christian burial and liturgical commemoration of the departed. Once again, therefore, we are presented with important evidence for the existence of a practice outside Africa which one might otherwise be tempted to deride, imagining the grave-side prayers and eucharists to be mere local phenomena due to the province's peculiar cultural heritage and close contacts with Paganism.

Theologically, this passage from the Didascalia is of equal interest for the further light it sheds on Syrian custom concerning the commemoration of the departed. Prayer, it should be noted, is to be offered ' for those who are asleep' and should be ' without distinction'. In what sense is this exhortation to be understood? In an 'inclusive' sense as indicating a general commemoration of all the departed, Christian and non-Christian alike? Such would certainly seem to be the plain sense of the passage. However, given the theological background of the liturgy and the fact that it arose in a period of persecution when the divisions between pagan and Christian would be all too clearly defined, such an interpretation of the passage is not very likely - if only on pragmatic grounds. More probably, the exhortation should be interpreted in an exclusive sense, referring to a commemoration not simply of ~~the~~ certain faithful departed, but of all the faithful departed, in the sense that the writer envisages no artificial division of the Church into 'martyr' and 'non-martyr', or 'saint' and 'ordinary Christian'. Hence the direction to pray ' without distinction' (sine discretione) comes not as a commendation of the practice of praying for all dead persons, but as an approval of an existing tradition of commending to God the souls of all the faithful departed without differentiation. This interpretation is not beyond dispute, however, and is therefore offered tentatively, the dominical command to pray for one's persecutors not being without relevance.

Still, even with this caveat, an 'exclusive' interpretation of the evidence would seem to be preferable, one in keeping with primitive insights and with the Eastern tradition as a whole as it will be seen to have developed in succeeding decades.

With the peace of the Church and the conversion of the Empire the Church entered upon an age of readjustment. Bitter persecution and the almost complete disorganisation of worship which it brought about were replaced by imperial patronage and state provision for worship in the space of much less than a decade. The next fifty years consequently became the formative age of historic Christian worship, a time of unparalleled liturgical revision throughout Christendom, with churches evaluating their own local traditions, sifting their devotional value and borrowing freely from each other whatever seemed most expressive or attractive in the rites of other churches. Any assessment of this period thus becomes more complicated. For it is one thing to have a knowledge of the course of liturgical history - of when this custom was introduced and where, of how a particular prayer was given a new turn and by whom; but it is quite another and a more difficult thing to understand the real motive forces which often underlie such changes. The hardest thing of all is to assess their effects upon the ideas and devotions of the vast unlearned and unliterary but praying masses of contemporary men and women who very quickly had been incorporated into the life of the Church following the peace.[44]

In view of this new atmosphere and the scope it gave for exchange and reappraisal, it is hardly surprising to find that the evidence for the commemoration of the dead, both literary and liturgical suddenly becomes abundant in the East during this period. A good example - and one which is highly significant - is provided by Eusebius who tells us that the obsequies of Constantine were the occasion of a great act of intercession for the Emperor who had put an end to the persecution. As his body lay before the altar, Eusebius describes

how

> a vast crowd of people, in company with the priests of God, with tears and great lamentation offered their prayers to God for the Emperor's soul.[45]

Eleven years after Constantine's death, Cyril of Jerusalem (315 - 386) in his Catechetical Lectures given in the year 350 (or 348), provides more detailed testimony and bears witness to the permanent commemoration of the departed in the liturgy of Jerusalem.[46] Speaking of the Great Intercession in the Eucharist, he says:

> Then we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us, first Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, that at their prayers and intercessions God would receive our petition.[47] Then on behalf also of the Holy Fathers and Bishops who have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to their souls, for whom the supplication is put up, while that holy and most awful sacrifice is set forth.[48]

One of the interesting things about this passage is the way in which St. Cyril draws a distinction between the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs, on the one hand, to whom prayer is addressed, and on the other hand, the holy fathers and bishops, for whom prayer is offered. This differentiation which in this context would seem to reflect a temporal stratification, some sort of division between the faithful of remoter generations, the great heroes of the faith, and the recently departed, people known and loved by the present generation, tres in ~~division as much as anything else, that is, a division between past and present generations in the ranks of the faithful, has already been noted elsewhere,~~ with an observation made in another context, concerning ~~in connection with~~ the particular devotion felt for martyrs. This sort of differentiation ~~separation~~ will be seen in the next chapter to have become increasingly apparent in the Western liturgy of this period, so that by the close of the fourth century, many Western churches were actually abstaining from praying for the martyrs and the greater saints. With the apparent notable exception of St. Cyril, however, no corresponding development is to be found in the liturgy of the East. Not that the East was without any veneration of the saints - far from it! The theologians of the period display a distinct devotion to the saints to whom are credited singular honours. St. Ephraem Syrus, for example, actually enjoins the

practice of invoking the saints in prayer. Yet, it is to be noted, not even St. Ephraem refutes the reciprocity of that relationship by proscribing the practice of offering prayer for the saints themselves by the living. Hence the strangeness of St. Cyril's thought in this matter which one can only assume reflected contemporary Jerusalem custom.[49]

The validity of such a practice is, of course, bound up with ~~ultimately dependent upon the acceptance of the proposition that there is a~~ the notion that there is a differentiation in the state of the faithful departed relative to the 'holiness' of a given individual ~~or, to put it another way, whether it can be maintained with any theological credibility~~ and with the thought of the saints having already received their full reward. ~~or whether they must await it till the Last Day.~~ That they had already received it was denied by Justin Martyr[50] and Irenaeus[51], as has been seen, Tertullian[52], by way of contrast, only making an exception for the cases of martyrs. Similarly, Origen[53] at the beginning of the third century, made no exceptions; and in this he was to be normative for Eastern practice as a whole. For in the East, to this very day, the faithful have always been held to be of one class. As Kallistos Ware has written in his book <u>The Orthodox Church</u>,

> In God and His Church there is no division between the living and the departed, but all are one in the love of the Father. Whether we are alive or whether we are dead, as members of the Church we still belong to the same family, and still have a duty to bear one another's burdens. Therefore just as Orthodox Christians here on earth pray for one another and ask for one another's prayers, so they pray also for the faithful departed and ask the faithful departed to pray for them. Death cannot sever the bond of mutual love which links the members of the Church together.[54]

In the East then, there is no 'grading' of the departed into those for whom it is deemed theologically appropriate to pray, and those, who by God's special favour, are considered worthy to be entreated. Reference to this fact has already been made but it is worth emphasising. Its significance in Eastern theology is

graphically seen, for example, in the Liturgy of St. Mark which was used in the patriarchate of Alexandria[55] (and from which the modern Coptic liturgies of St. Cyril, St. Basil and St. Gregory are derived). There prayer is offered for the rest and remembrance of the souls of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors and others, including St. Mark himself by name![56] In this liturgy and in other liturgies of the period, all the faithful departed are united in a common commemoration (ἀνάμνησις). And this term, far from meaning a bare commemoration or mere remembrance, in fact, as Vladimir Lossky points out, refers to 'an initiation into a mystery, the revelation of a reality which is always present in the Church'.[57] The commemoration of the faithful departed in the Eastern tradition is nothing less than a participation in the mystery of the Church which is the mystery of the one Communion of Saints. Something of this understanding is apparent in the prayer which forms the climax of the commemoration in the Jerusalem liturgy:

> Give rest, O Sovereign Lord, our God, to the souls of all those, who are in the tabernacle of thy kingdom, graciously bestowing upon them the blessing of thy promises, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, which Thou has prepared, O God, for them that love thy holy name. Give rest unto their souls and account them worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven.[58]

But it should not be imagined from all this that the practice of commemorating the departed in prayer and sacrament went undisputed in the Ancient Church. On the contrary, it is clear from the writings of Cyril that doubts about the custom were being freely expressed in some circles, certainly in Jerusalem, for he says to the Neophytes:

> I know many who say, 'What is a soul, leaving this world with sins or without them, profited by being remembered in the prayer?'[59]

To this criticism, Cyril replies by giving an illustration from a case where a king of a country had banished certain persons who had offended him, and was afterwards induced by the present of a crown, which their relations had woven and offered to him on their behalf, to grant a commutation of their sentence. He then goes on

to say:

> In like manner we too, offering our prayers for those who have fallen asleep, even though they be sinners, do not, it is true, weave for them a crown, but we offer Christ, who was slain for our sins, that we may obtain his favour both for them and for ourselves. [60]

This passage, by not defining the kind of sinners intended, leaves it to some extent uncertain what Cyril's real views were, and he nowhere else (to my knowledge) expresses himself on the same subject. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the general tenor of his thought and especially the comparison of the exiled transgressors, favours the view that Cyril envisaged an intermediate state not only in which some sort of 'spiritual progress' could be made, but also one in which sin may be forgiven.[61] This specific proposition may be due to the continuing development of a post-baptismal penitential system, though with Cyril, it is more likely to be a natural outworking of his 'high' conception of the Eucharistic Sacrifice as propitiatory in character.

In addition to the witness of St. Cyril to the thought and liturgy of the Jerusalem Church, with respect to those departed in the faith of Christ, we are fortunate in possessing two other contemporary sets of evidence from which it is possible to construct an even fuller picture of the mid-fourth century thought in the East. The first of these is a short Syrian document of doubtful date (though probably 350) which was probably originally written in Greek, though the only copies which survive today are in Syriac, Ethiopic and Arabic translations. The treatise, as one might guess from its title , The Testament of Our Lord, professes to be in the words of Christ himself. It contains detailed regulations on matters of ecclesiastical order and church building, and incorporates a complete liturgy. In view of the fact that the document was a private compilation in all probability, it would be unwise to assume that it represents the official practice of the Syrian Church. Nevertheless, it does provide a comparison for the Liturgy of Jerusalem, and another example of the Litury of the Syrian Church particularly when seen

against the earlier Anaphora of Saints Addai and Mari and the Didascalia both of which were North Syrian in origin, and the later Apostolic Constitutions (c.375) with which it has strong literary connections.[62]

The Testament of Our Lord, like St. Cyril of Jerusalem, reflects the general feeling of Christian thought that it is of no avail to pray for the heathen departed or for any but the baptized. The only exception to this rule would occur in times of persecution when there might be a catechumen who desired baptism but who died before he could receive the sacrament, and such a person is described as one 'baptised in his own blood'.[63] Concerning prayer for the faithful departed, The Testament of Our Lord is similarly traditional in the orientation of its thought. For example at the Eucharist the Bishop's Eucharistic Prayer contains the following petition:

> Remember those who have fallen asleep in faith, and grant us an inheritance with thy saints; vouchsafe us power to please Thee, even as they pleased Thee.[64]

And the Deacon in his bidding prayer says:

> For those who have fallen asleep from the Church, let us beseech that the Lord may bestow upon them a place of rest.[65]

The only indication that the author of this treatise may have accepted a belief in some sort of progress in the life after death in keeping with the thought of some of his contemporaries, is found in a single reference to the custom of giving alms to benefit the dead. It would seem that following death, the deceased's possessions were given to the poor that 'he may be profited'.[66] But this, by itself, hardly constitutes irrefutable evidence. A fuller account of contemporary practice, one which was undoubtedly normative for the local church and in no way individualistic, is however provided by Serapion (315-386) Bishop of Thmuis, in Egypt.

The Sacramentary of Serapion[67] which was really a liturgical office book,[68] provides us with invaluable evidence in

its unusually long prayers and well-documented intercessions. It is important because one of the difficulties in assessing the thought of the Church about the departed as expressed in its corporate worship is the fact that it was probably not until quite late in liturgical development that the pattern of the intercessions offered at the Eucharist received formulation, structure and documentation. The intercession in the Eucharistic Anaphora of the Sacramentary contains the following passage:

> We intercede also on behalf of all who have fallen asleep, of whom the memorial is made.
>
> (the Diptychs of the Dead are recited)*
>
> Sanctify these souls; for Thou knowest all. Sanctify all those souls which have fallen asleep in the Lord, and number them with all thy holy powers, and give unto them a place and a mansion in thy kingdom.[69]

*NB. Greek says 'The names of the dead were submitted'.

The content of this prayer is much the same as that of the earlier prayers which have already been examined, though one wonders whether 'all those who have fallen asleep' (πάντων τῶν κεκοιμημένων) included intercession for the 'saints'. Of greater interest, however, is the specific reference to the public recital of the names of the departed at the point in the Eucharistic Canon where the priest comes to pray for the dead, for the Sacramentary of Serapion is the earliest extant document to record such a custom.[70] It is difficult to know quite what one should understand by the rubric in question. It may have been that the names of the faithful departed were recited by someone else aloud whilst they were being said also in a lower tone or secretly by the priest, but one cannot be sure. In the opinion of Edmund Bishop,[71] the practice represented by Serapion was not in fact original to Egypt but was itself an importation, probably from Jerusalem. St. Cyril, as has been noted, mentions a commemoration of the dead in the Intercession after the Consecration which in Bishop's view suggests that the practice was already current in Jerusalem. Certainly, the Church of Jerusalem in this period is 'in spirit quite modern, and early adopts or conceives ideas or practices to which some other regions

of more conservative tendencies had difficulty in wholly or quite heartily accommodating themselves.'[72]

Although we are concerned with the theology of the Eastern Church in this chapter, it is useful to pause at this juncture, if only for convenience, sake, to consider briefly the practice of the West with respect to the recitation of the names of the faithful departed.[73] The term 'diptych' which as applied to the practice reflected in the rite of Serapion may be an anachronism, is derived from a hinged board, on the two wings of which were written the names of persons, both living and departed, for whom the prayers of the Church were specifically desired in the offering of the eucharistic sacrifice. The diptychs appear to go back to the reading by the deacon at the mass, of the names of those who had brought an offering of bread for the eucharist. Evidence from the Council of Elvira (305 or 306)[74], for example, indicates that the recitation of the names of 'offerers' at the altar in connection with the oblation there made (that is, offerings of bread and wine for the Eucharist) was a recognized practice in the Church of Spain; though this Church, it should be remembered 'was then the best established and organised Christianity in the West'.[75] Once the custom of making an offering as an act of prayer or thanksgiving on behalf of other individuals was established, it was only natural that their names also, should be read together with, and in the same way, as those of the offerers themselves. In the West, however, it is the recital of names of the living that in the early period receives prominence, whereas in the East, it is the recital of the names of the dead.[76] This practical distinction, again in the opinion of Bishop[77], seems to be connected with differing developments with regard to the altar-offerings by the people of bread and wine for the Eucharist which long continued to be made in the West but which in the East fell generally at an early date into disuse. Indeed, as regards the diptychs of the dead in the West (as distinct from the silent commemoration of names in the canon by the celebrant), evidence is scanty, apart from that which is afforded by the prayers of

the Gallican and Mozarabic missals, which are, of course, of much later date. It is thus open to doubt whether the practice was ever native or early in the West or whether it may not have been introduced with much other Eastern practice in the course of the sixth and seventh centuries.

To return to the Sacramentary of Serapion, however. In addition to the intercession in the Eucharistic Anaphora, for the departed, there is a separate prayer recorded for recital at the burial of the dead, which would seem to have belonged to the preliminary office which took place in the house before the commencement of the funeral procession.[78] Hence, the rite 'Prayer for one who is dead and is to be carried forth' (Εὐχὴ περὶ τεθνεῶτος καὶ ἐκκομιζομένου). The prayer is as follows:

> O God, who holdest the authority of life and death, God of the spirits and Master of all flesh, God, who killest and makest alive, who bringest down to the Gates of Hades and bringest up, who createst the spirit of man in him and takest to thyself the souls of the saints and givest them rest; Thou who dost alter and change and transform thy creatures as is right and expedient, being thyself alone incorruptible and unalterable and eternal, we beseech thee for the repose and rest of this thy servant (or, of this thy handmaid): give rest to his soul, his spirit, in green places, in chambers of rest with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all thy saints, and raise up his body in the day which Thou hast ordained according to thy promises which cannot lie, that Thou mayest render to it also that inheritance of which it is worthy in Thy holy pastures. Remember not his transgressions and sins, and cause his departure to be peaceful and blessed. Heal the griefs of his relatives who survive him with the Spirit of consolation, and grant unto us all a good end. Through thy only begotten Jesus Christ, through whom to Thee is the glory and the power in the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.[79]

The text of this prayer, like the liturgical material already examined, reveals no trace of a belief in any penal suffering to be undergone by any of those who are prayed for. 'Rest', 'sleep,' 'a place of repose' are the things prayed for. Nor should the fact that they are prayed for imply that at the

moment of praying that they are not enjoyed by the departed or their assured possession. On the contrary, it implies that these are the things which it is hoped that the Christian dead are already assured of and enjoy. The atmosphere of the prayer is thus entirely continuous with that of the earliest recorded prayers of Christians for their dead loved-ones both in its theological direction and in its characteristic confidence. In all respects, the Sacramentary of Serapion is thus completely normative of what has been gleaned of contemporary Eastern spirituality.

In addition to the information supplied by the Didascalia and the other material from North Syria, the Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril of Jerusalem and the Egyptian Sacramentary of Serapion, information concerning the liturgical development of the Eastern Church is also available in the document entitled Apostolic Constitutions, or to give it its full title, Ordinances of the Holy Apostles through Clement. This work which is a collection of ecclesiastical law dating from the latter half of the fourth century is certainly of Syrian provenance. It is interesting, therefore, for the further light it sheds upon the Syrian Church practice of the period. And what is more , being itself a compilation of earlier documents (such as the Didascalia and the Didache),[80] the Apostolic Constitutions is interesting for the liturgical developments it displays - or rather the developments it does not display!

For example, in the liturgy of the eighth book, which on the whole represents the liturgy of Antioch, one finds the following prayer in the Great Intercession of the Eucharistic Anaphora:

> Further we pray to thee on behalf of all those from all the ages who are well pleasing to thee: holy patriarchs, prophets, righteous men, apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, presbyters, deacons, sub-deacons, readers, singers, virgins, widows, laymen and all of those whose name Thou thyself knowest.[81]

This prayer immediately recalls the account given by Cyril of Jerusalem liturgy with the one noteworthy difference, however, that the great saints and the martyrs are included in the one petition with the faithful generally, the Eucharistic Sacrifice being offered equally for all. In so doing, the Apostolic Constitutions serve to highlight the unprecedented custom of the Jerusalem Church in this respect, as compared with the general practice of the rest of the Eastern Churches.

Another interesting reference in the Apostolic Constitutions, also in the eighth book, concerns the instructions for funerals. Explicit mention is made of any person lately deceased who was to be commemorated in the following terms:

> For those who are laid to rest in Christ, after the bidding prayer, that we may not repeat it again, the deacon shall add as follows: Let us pray for our brethren who are laid to rest in Christ that God the lover of man, who has received his soul, may forgive him every sin, voluntary and involuntary, and may be merciful and gracious, and may appoint him a place in the land of the pious, who are sent into the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...[82]

The Bishop then offers a prayer to the same effect; part of which is as follows:

> O God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who art their God as living, not as dead (for the souls of all live unto Thee and the spirits of the righteous are in thy hand, and no torment shall touch them; for all the saints are in thy hand), look now upon this thy servant, whom thou hast chosen and taken unto another lot, and pardon him whatever sin he has committed willingly or unwillingly, and give him kind angels, and set him in the bosom of the patriarchs and prophets and apostles, and of all who have pleased thee from the beginning of the world, where there is no grief or pain or sighing, but the place of the godly at liberty, and the land of the upright of those who therein see the glory of thy Christ, through whom to thee is glory, honour and majesty, thanksgiving and worship in the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.[83]

The section ends with a direction to solemnize with psalms, lessons, and prayer the third, ninth and fortieth days after the death of the deceased, as well as the anniversary itself.[84] It is added that such celebrations are of service only to the faithful; to give alms to the poor on behalf of others is futile (contrast Testament of Our Lord); their condition remains what it was before death. (ᾧ γὰρ περιόντι ἐχθρὸν ἦν τὸ θεῖον, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ μεταστάντι).[85]

In the above passages, one can see once again that the general tenor and tone of the prayers for the departed in the christianity of the East, both in the Eucharistic commemoration and in the funeral rites, was one of confident expectation and peace. In God and his Church there is no separation between the living and the dead, for all are one in the risen Christ. There is no thought of any impending pain of purgation which might await the faithful after death (note the double negative in the Greek), for the departed go to the place where there is 'no grief or pain or sighing', to be 'in the glory of Christ. In view of this, the reference to sin, which is much more specific ~~from~~ than the general petition found in the Sacramentary of Serapion, is extremely interesting, because although it accepts the possibility of a christian dying in unpardoned and wilful sin for which the forgiveness of God must be sought, it nevertheless expressly rules out any idea that the divine forgiveness could ever be meeted out through the fire of purgation. Indeed, the general warmth and feelings of assurance that breathe through the prayers is in distinct contrast to Western piety, which was increasingly tending to become preoccupied with sin to a point of unreality or morbidity, and consequently with the possibility of purgatorial suffering in the after-life. It even contrasts with the speculative thought of Origen which finds no real parallel in any of the Eastern liturgical formularies of the period.

All in all, it would not be too great a generalisation to say that the spirituality of the East as reflected in the

extant liturgical material of the period is constant in its adherence both to the thought and the vocabulary of primitive christian thought, which was itself rooted in the New Testament perspective. With the exception of Origen and one assumes some of his Alexandrian contemporaries, it proclaims a theology of the state of the departed which is relatively undeveloped and 'agnostic' in format, but which is in no way negative or superficial.

c) OPPOSITION

Before embarking upon an examination of the way in which the developing liturgy of the East is related to the theological writings of the period, consideration must first be given to a controversy which highlights the problems resulting from the close inter-relation of spirituality to theology. For it was a controversy which called into question not only the general validity of the custom of offering prayer for the dead, but also the theological presuppositions upon which such a practice rested and the possible pastoral implications of its abuse.

In the year 350 the question 'What is a soul leaving this world with sins or without them, profited by being remembered in prayer?' was being debated in Jerusalem and to it, St. Cyril had given a brief but firm answer. But such a question needed a more complete appraisal than Cyril was prepared to offer and within a few years the dissatisfaction which must have been brewing in certain quarters of the Church, came to a head in the outspoken words of Aerius who was a presbyter of Pontus, and who alone in christian antiquity was to oppose outright the established practice of offering prayer for the faithful departed.

Aerius it would appear affirmed not only that prayer for the dead was itself useless, but also that it was actually harmful in its effect because it induced men to live carelessly, in the hope that such prayers would avail for them after death. For this contention amongest others,[86] he was classed as a heretic by Epiphanius (315 - 403) in the East and later by Augustine (354 - 430) in the West. Indeed it is from their writings that virtually all of our knowedge of the opinions of Aerius are derived.[87] Augustine, for his part, merely says under this head that Aerius held certain particular tenets, 'asserting that oblations ought not to be made on behalf of those who sleep' (Dicens offerri pro dormientibus non oportere).[88] Epiphanius, however, in his work against heresies which includes

eighty in number and which collectively is known as the Panarion,[89] provides a more detailed picture of his opponent's views. For example, concerning the commemoration of the departed in prayer, he represents Aerius as holding the following views:

> To what purpose do you name the names of the dead after death? For the living man prays or he gives alms. But what profit does the dead man gain? If the prayers of the living can in any way benefit the dead, then none need trouble himself to live a holy life or to be a benefactor to his race, but let him acquire friends by any means he pleases, winning them to his side by bribes, or claiming their friendship at his death, and let those pray that he may have no suffering in the other world, and that the heinous sins which he has committed may not be required at his hands.[90]

If this is a faithful representation of the language of Aerius and if in the replies which Epiphanius gives we have a fair exponent of what one assumes was the prevailing belief in the extent to which prayers for the dead were efficacious, then the evidence in the Panarion must be allowed its full weight. For apart from the dubious theological and ecclesiastical credentials of Aerius which might dispose one to regard his views on every subject with a degree of suspicion, it is immediately clear from the answer which Epiphanius makes to the heretic's objections, that Aerius had misunderstood the legitimate usage of intercession for the dead as officially upheld in the Church. Epiphanius argues that the established practice of Christendom rests on the conviction that the departed members of the Church still exist, and live with Christ; to pray for them is not more futile than to pray for friends who are away upon a journey. And even if the prayers of the living do not wholly cancel their sins, one can still render service to them by praying for them. For example :

> Touching the commemoration of the dead, what could be more worthwhile? What more opportune or more wonderful advisable than that those who are still here should believe that those who have departed are alive, and not annihilated, but exist and live with the Lord?[91]

Similarly, he can write as follows:

> The prayer made on their behalf is beneficial even if it does not wipe away all their offences; for because men often trip knowingly and unknowingly, whilst they are in the world, they are advantageous for the manifestation of that which is more perfect. For we make our memorial on behalf of righteous men and sinners; on behalf of sinners praying for the mercy of God, and on behalf of righteous and fathers and patriarchs, prophets and apostles and evangelists and martyrs and confessors, and bishops and anchorites and all that class, that we may separate the Lord Jesus Christ from the order of men by means of the honour given to him, and that we may render worship to him remembering that the Lord is not to be put on the same footing with any man. [92]

Epiphanius is thus very far from accepting the interpretation which his opponent had chosen to put upon the practice; and there is no attempt to maintain the efficacy of prayer for heinous sins. Indeed, he indirectly refutes the idea when he says that there may be sins to cancel for which prayer is powerless. He speaks, it is true, of the 'trippings' to which human nature is prone, but it is only to place them in contrast to the more grievous sins which nothing would obliterate.

What is also interesting is the way in which Epiphanius in his argument against Aerius, true to Eastern spirituality, maintains the concept of a single liturgical commemoration of the faithful departed, ' righteous' and 'sinful'. In so doing, it is important to note how he emphasises the honour due to the saints, but carefully distinguishes between their relative holiness and the unapproachable purity and majesty of Christ. In thus approaching the question he is able to answer a further question which although not necessarily implicit in Aerius' criticisms of prayer for the dead, is of interest to the modern investigator; namely, the criticism that such a practice endangers our acknowledgement of the uniqueness and adequacy of the Redeemer in relation to the permanent and eternal significance of earthly life and the decision of faith. One of the consequences of the importance which Eastern spirituality laid upon the reciprocal

character of the communion of saints and prayer as the common bond which united heaven and earth, living and departed in a common worship; and certainly one of the major problems of Western spirituality with its near-rigid preoccupation with merit and the notion that the effectiveness of prayer was directly proportionate to the holiness of the person who offered it, was that it could be claimed that such beliefs called into question the essential centrality of Christ the Redeemer. Epiphanius, for his part, it should be noted, never doubts the centrality of Christ (in fact, he actually emphasises it!) but at the same time, he finds no difficulty or contradiction in associating the action of the whole Church, living and departed, with the centrality of the office and work of Christ. Prayer for the faithful departed and with the faithful departed, was for him not a manipulation of divine justice but an act motivated purely by love for which concepts such as 'necessity' and 'profit' were inadequate.

Perhaps two general conclusions emerge from this consideration of the controversy between Aerius and Epiphanius. First, and most obvious, the controversy confirms the fact that the custom of offering prayers for the repose of the faithful departed must have been both universal and also long established in the Church of the East and of the West. It was not a late-fourth-century development which was gallantly opposed by some members of the Church who longed for a return to earlier Christian practice, as some commentators would have us believe. That this was not the case is apparent not only from all the evidence which has already been considered, but also from the force of Epiphanius' argument and the fact that not one single Church Father came to the support of Aerius. Epiphanius, moreover, can argue against Aerius on the grounds that it is too late to attempt to change the inflexible rules of Mother Church, who has ordered prayers and offerings for the dead:

> Our mother the Church has unbreakable ~~laws~~ customs binding upon it, which are not open to be broken. 93

Indeed, the simple fact that the Aerians seem scarcely to have survived the death of their founder is no small indication of the general assent of Christendom to the practice of praying for the departed.

Secondly, and this follows on from what has just been said, it is also apparent that even if the practice of praying for the faithful departed was universal in the Church, and even if most of the Church upheld the official perspective put forward by Epiphanius, one cannot help thinking that there must have been some substance to Aerius' criticisms to warrant the vehemence of his attack. That there were some rather 'fringe' practices and rather speculative opinions in some quarters of the Church has already been noted and particularly in Africa. But granted that this was the case, it nevertheless seems highly probable that any perversions of established practice that there were, were in reality localised and certainly not the norm of Christian usage. This much is clear from the evidence of the extant liturgies of the period.

In short the controversy between Epiphanius and Aerius is more important for what it does not say than anything else, for the gross manipulation of Christian practice to which it does not witness and for the perverse perspective of early Christian theology to which it makes no testimony. Placed in the context of the development of Christian thought about the state of the faithful departed hitherto, it is significant only in its insignificance.

d) THOUGHT IN THE EAST FROM MID-FOURTH CENTURY TO THE END OF THE 6TH CENTURY

As has already been indicated, much of the liturgical development in the Eastern Church during this period finds close parallel in the writings of the leading theologians of the day. For example, the increasing veneration with which the saints were coming to be held, which was particularly apparent in the thought of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, finds forthright expression in the voluminous writings of St. Ephraem Syrus. St. Ephraem Syrus (306 - 373) who was a Syrian Biblical exegete and ecclesiastical writer,[94] and a contemporary of St. Cyril, enjoined devotion to the saints and particularly to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Indeed, so great was his admiration for the saints that he expressly encouraged their invocation in prayer. In his panegyric on the forty martyrs, for example, he concludes with an appeal to the mother of one of the martyrs, saying:

> Wherefore, O holy and faithful and blessed, I beseech you, supplicate the holy ones on my behalf, and say, 'Triumphant martyrs of Christ! Intercede for Ephraem, the least, the miserable, that I may find mercy, and through the grace of Christ may be saved. [95]

And in praise of the whole army of martyrs he can say:

> We therefore call upon you, O most holy martyrs ... that you will pray to the Lord on behalf of us miserable sinners, beset with the filthiness of sloth, that he will pour upon us his divine grace, for the perpetual illumination of our hearts by the rays of a holy love ... For you are pronounced truly blessed and glorious by the common voice of angels and men. [96]

That St. Ephraem Syrus was not alone in his devotion to the saints is apparent from the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers. St. Basil of Caesarea (330 - 379), for example, not only calls the Forty Martyrs 'co-operators in prayer' (δεήσεως συνεργοί)[97] in a rhetorical address to them, but expressly declares what his own practice is, and the object at which it aims:

> I accept also the holy apostles, prophets and martyrs, and I call upon them for their intercession to God, that by them, that is by their mediation, the good God may be merciful unto me, and that redemption may be granted unto me for my offences. [98] *

*N.B. Many scholars contend that this letter is spurious.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus (329 - 389) is similarly forthright in his approval of the invocation of the saints. In one of his orations, for example, he quotes a passage from an oration by Cyprian (which is in all probability falsely attributed), in which there is a distinct appeal to the Blessed Virgin Mary for help: 'beseeching the Virgin Mary to help a virgin in danger.'[99] It may be doubted with some justice whether the facts described by Gregory are accurately narrated but regardless of this, the passage at least shows that he saw no improbability in a story of a Christian in the first half of the third century seeking the aid, in one form of another, of one of the saints, and in this case, of the Mother of Our Lord. Whether or not such a view can be taken as evidence for the early emergence of the practice is highly questionable (certainly, there is no evidence to support such a deduction), but about the practice of Gregory of Nazianzus himself there is no doubt. For example, in addition to other invocations elsewhere, he addresses St. Cyprian at the end of the oration already quoted:

> Look down on us propitiously from above and direct our speech and life, and be a shepherd or a co-shepherd to this holy flock; and directing the rest, as far as may be, for the best, and driving away the grievous wolves, the hunters of syllables and phrases, and bestowing on us a more perfect and brighter illumination of the Holy Trinity, in whose presence you stand, to whom we give worship and glory. [100]

That it was the help of prayer which was thus sought from St. Cyprian by Gregory may be seen from his address to St. Basil in another oration:

> Look down on us from above, O divine and sacred head, and either by your intercession take away the thorn in the flesh which afflicts us, or persuade us to bear it with fortitude. [101]

And again in the same oration:

> He now abides in heaven, and there, as I think, offers sacrifice on our behalf, and prays for the people, for he did not so leave us as to have left us altogether. [102]

From this latter passage one can see the real basis of the invocation of saints as practised in the East. For just as prayer for the departed arose initially quite spontaneously from the subconscious instincts of the people as a natural expression of the devotion and love in which they held their departed loved ones, though in the process of its emergence it both gathered and generated a not-inconsiderable body of doctrinal ideas that was later used to effect its own ex post facto justification; so also the invocation of the dead in Christ in prayer was a natural expression and outworking of the reality of the bond of that fellowship. As has already been indicated - but it is a point that must be emphasised - this custom in no way represented an undermining of the all-sufficiency of Christ the one true Mediator, but rather an exemplification of the coinherence of the community of the faithful, living and departed, in and with and through the saving work of Christ. Thus, Gregory of Nazianzus, following his father's death can declare:

> I am sure that he (protects his flock) more effectually now by his intercession than he did formerly by his teaching, in proportion as he now is nearer to God, having shaken off the fetters of the body, and being rid of those impurities which obscure the understanding and converses with the First and Purest of intelligencies with no intervening veil, being admitted to the rank and liberties of the angels. 103.

Gregory's thought here is completely grounded in the perspective of the New Testament even in his use of vocabulary. His belief that his father is 'now nearer to God' is true to the Pauline notion of 'departing to be with Christ' for he still maintains an air of expectancy and waiting. Fulfilment is not yet. At the same time, however, no sin or impurity is thought to cloud his father's vision of his Lord. And if Gregory admitted the need for

some sort of purgation for the getting rid 'of those impurities which obscure the understanding', and there is no necessary reason for thinking that he did, then it is completely subservient to the main emphasis of his thought on the joy and peace which his parent now enjoys. Within this context it was inevitable that prayer should be entirely natural and a positive expression of Gregory's love for his father and his father's love for him, for he never doubts the reciprocal nature of prayer. And to this day, in the Eastern Church, it is the common practice for people to commend themselves to the prayers of their deceased parents and friends, even when there was no mark of special sanctity.

To return briefly to the question of the possibility of purgation in the after-life, however, it should be admitted that Gregory does make one reference to the existence of such a state for some but not all of the faithful departed. In his oration On the Holy Lights and in the context of his writing against the Novatianists Gregory, having condemned the rigorism of the Novatianists as disguised spiritual arrogance, puts forward the proposition that even if the lapsed have not already received divine forgiveness (and in his opinion they have!) they may well receive it in the life after death:

> Perhaps in it they will be baptized with Fire, in that Last Baptism which is more painful and longer, which devours wood like grass, and consumes the stubble of every evil. [104]

Is this a reference to a belief in some sort of purgatory? If so then it is at best tentative, being more of the order of a polemical utterance than an integrated portion of his theology of the life after death. [105] Moreover, it is to be noted that Gregory is entirely eschatological in the orientation of his thought here. For the purgation that he postulates is not one of an extended temporal duration, but rather one resulting from the fire of judgement on the Last Day. In short, if Gregory of Nazianzus envisaged the possibility of a purgation for some of the faithful, he did not accept the existence of a state of Purgatory.

With Gregory of Nyssa (330 - 395), however, one is presented with a clearer, more systematic exposition of the subject, one that displays the author's indebtedness to Origen[106] and to a framework of thought in which the eventual purification of the wicked, the conquest and disappearance of evil, and the final restoration of all things are envisaged. Gregory looks forward to the day when after a long period of purification by fires a united thanksgiving shall be raised to God from all the creation, both from those creatures which have been chastened in the process of purification and from those who never needed purification at all.

> In like manner when, after long periods of time, the evil of our nature ... has been expelled, and when there has been a restoration of those who are now lying in Sin to their primal state, a harmony of thanksgiving will arise from all creation, as well as from those who in the process of the purgation have suffered chastisement, as from those who needed not any purgation at all. [107]

In this passage from the Catechetical Oration the positive orientation of Gregory of Nyssa's thought is clearly visible. Suffering is in no way pictured as an end in itself (as Western Medieval thought tended to do) but rather as a means to an end, that end being the fulfilment of God's purpose for his creation. Gregory represents this goal as the 'restoration' of all things (ἀποκατάστασις) in which there will be 'a harmony of thanksgiving' (ὁμόφωνος ἡ εὐχαριστία). Purification is a necessary preliminary to this end only because sin and evil must be completely eradicated that perfection may live. And even here Gregory is able to maintain a thoroughly positive perspective by portraying the suffering not as punitive in nature, but as remedial. For example: 'The healing of the soul will be purification from evil and this cannot be accomplished without suffering.'[108] In this respect, one can see something of Gregory's inheritance from Origen and of his view of Good and Evil; for he sees them not as two opposed Existencies, but as Being is opposed to not-Being. Sin exists only as an absence. Thus, purgative suffering marks a "growing into Being" as it were, a return to God who is the Source and End of all Perfection.

Not that Gregory imagines that all Christians need to undergo purification for, as has been seen above, he appears to envisage only the wilfully impenitent as needing purification. Children who die in their early infancy, for example, 'pass to the blessed lot at once'.[109] The suffering which the impenitent must endure, however, is entirely proportional to their degree of sin.[110] He says that those whose stains are uncleansed by the mystic water of baptism, by the invocation of the power of God, by penitence and reformation, must go to their appropriate place; and the appropriate place for adulterated gold is the refiner's fire, so that the evil in their composition may be melted out, and their nature, long ages hereafter, may be made pure and sacred to God. There is, he says, a cleansing power both in fire and in water; and those who have washed away the stain of evil by the mystic water of baptism will have no need of the other form of cleansing.

> For not everything that is granted in the resurrection a return to existence will return to the same kind of life. There is a wide interval between those who have been purified, and those who still need purification. For those in whose life- time here the purification by the laver has preceded, there is a restoration to a kindred state. Now, to the pure, freedom from passion is that kindred state, and that in this freedom from passion blessedness consists, admits of no dispute. But as for those whose weaknesses have become inveterate, and to whom no purgation of their defilement has been applied, no mystic water, no invocation of the Divine power, no amendment by repentance, it is absolutely necessary that they should come to be in something proper to their case - just as the furnace is the proper thing for gold alloyed with dross - in order that the vice which has been mixed up in them being melted away after long succeeding ages, their nature may be restored pure again to God. Since, then, there is a cleansing virtue in fire and water, they who by the mystic water have washed away the defilement of their sin have no further need of the other form of purification, while they who have not been admitted to that form of purgation must needs be purified by fire.[111]

It is apparent from this passage that it is not of Purgatory that Gregory of Nyssa speaks. As with his contemporary Gregory of

Nazianzus , his thought is completely eschatological in its orientation. He is thinking of the condition to which some men will rise from death at the Last Day.[112] All, he says, will rise again; but the lot of those who have been cleansed will be very different from that of those who stand in need of cleansing. It is of these last - the men who at the great resurrection are found to need cleansing that he says that the appropriate place for them is the refiner's fire. His expression 'long ages hereafter' would of itself be enough to show that he was not thinking of a discipline in the intermediate state; and he evidently does not suppose that it will be applied to the ordinary Christian who, though faulty, retains his baptismal grace. His theology of the intermediate state itself remains congruent with that of earlier centuries, unchanged in its emphasis upon the waiting and anticipatory joy of the faithful departed which will be fulfilled at the Last Day when 'all will be in all' in the open contemplation of God.[113]

By way of contrast to St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. John Chrysostom (367 - 407) has virtually nothing to say about the possibility of purgative suffering in the after-life. As befits one who was primarily a moralist, his sermons and treatises do not contain systematic expositions of a theology of the state of the departed, but rather exhortations to prayer, homiletic discursions into the reasons for the commemoration of the faithful departed at the Eucharist and questions relating to the practice of the invocation of the saints.

For example, both in his earlier homilies delivered at Antioch and in his later ones delivered when he was Bishop of Constantinople, we find St. John Chrysostom warmly commending the 'traditional' practice of offering prayers for the departed. In one of his Homilies on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, for example, which was delivered at Antioch before 397, he speaks of the liturgical commemoration of the departed at the Eucharist.

> Not in vain do we make remembrance of the departed at the holy mysteries, and draw near to God on their behalf, beseeching the Lamb set forth who took away the sin of the world, but that thence to them may be some consolation. Not in vain, again, does he who stands at the altar when the awful mysteries are accomplished cry out: On behalf of all who have fallen asleep in Christ, and of those who are offering the memorials on their behalf. For if the memorials were not on their behalf these words would not be spoken. For our rites are no stage play (God forbid!); for they take place by the appointment of the Spirit. [114]

From his language here it seems highly probable that the commemoration and intercessions took place after the consecration in the Antiochene Liturgy. He speaks of petitions being offered when 'the Lamb is set forth' and elsewhere, speaking of the commemoration of the martyrs, he says that it is a great honour for them to be named 'whilst the Master is present', justifying the point by the analogy of petitions addressed to an Emperor whilst sitting on his throne, and the favours bestowed on the occasion of an imperial triumph. (Once again, one notes how in the East no differentiation is made among the faithful departed, all being commemorated together). Thus, like St. Cyril of Jerusalem before him, St. John Chrysostom would seem to lay great weight upon the efficacy of prayer at the moment of the eucharistic sacrifice. And this emphasis is apparent not only here but also in one of his later Homilies on the Epistle to the Philippians which incidentally provides an even fuller account of contemporary Eastern practice. It is an account, moreover, which is closely structured upon his understanding of the state of the departed, or to be more precise, the type of existence into which one is introduced at death. He writes as follows:

> What follows death is either good or ill. Let us then not simply grieve for the dead, nor joy for the living simply. But how? Let us grieve for sinners, not only when dying, but also while living. Let us joy for the just, not only while living but also when dead. For those though living are dead, while these although dead, yet live: those even while here are to be pitied of all, because they are at enmity with God;

the others even when they have departed thither, are blessed, because they are gone to Christ. Sinners, wherever they are, are far from the King. Therefore they are subjects for tears; while the just, be they here, or be they there, are with the King; and there, in a higher and nearer degree, not through an entrance, or by faith, but 'face to face'.

Let us then not make wailings for the dead simply, but for those who have died in sins. They deserve wailing; they deserve beating of the breast and tears. For tell me, what hope is there, when our sins accompany us thither, where there is no putting off sins? As long as they were here, perchance there was great opportunity that they would change, that they would become better; but when they had gone to Hades, where nought can be gained from repentance (for it is written, 'In Sheol who shall give thee thanks?'), are they not worthy of our lamentation?

Let us wail for those who depart hence in such sort; let us wail, I hinder you not; yet in no unseemly way.... Weep for the unbelievers; weep for those who differ in no way from them, those who depart hence without the illumination, without the seal! they indeed deserve our wailing, they deserve our groans; they are outside the Palace, with the culprits, with the condemned: for, 'Verily, I say to you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" ...

... Let us weep for these; let us assist them according to our power; let us think of some assistance for them, small though it may be, yet still let us assist them. How and in what way? By praying and entreating others to make prayers for them, by continually giving to the poor on their behalf. This deed has some consolation; for hear the words of God Himself, when He says, 'I will defend this city for Mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.' If the remembrance only of a just man had so great power when deeds are done for one, how great power will it not have? Not in vain did the Apostles order that remembrance should be made of the dead in the dreadful mysteries. They know that great gain resulteth to them, great benefit; for when the whole people stands with uplifted hands, a priestly assembly, and that awful sacrifice lies displayed, how shall we not prevail with God by our entreaties for them? And this we do for those who have departed in faith, whilst the catechumens are not thought worthy even of this consolation, but are deprived of all means of help save one. And what is this? We may give to the poor on their behalf. This deed in a certain way refreshes them. For God wills that we should be mutually assisted; else why has He ordered

> us to pray for peace and the good estate of the world? Why on behalf of all men? Since in this number are included robbers, violaters of tombs, thieves, men laden with untold crimes; and yet we pray on behalf of all; perchance they may turn. As then we pray for those living, who differ not from the dead, so too we pray for them. 115

From this passage it is clear that St. John Chrysostom accepted the traditional picture of the after-life with a simple division between those who had 'departed in faith' and those who were 'sinners', and in this, of course, he is in complete accord with New Testament principles. ~~Unlike~~ In comparison with Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom displays ~~no~~ less sympathy with Origenism. For example, He considers both righteous and impious to be in the same state inasmuch as both were within the compass of 'Hades', (though it is possible that he used the term more specifically as a designation of the place of the reprobate). But whereas the faithful at death depart to be 'with Christ' and, therefore, consequently enjoy eternal felicity,(a state which Chrysostom designates by the term 'Palace' among others), the sinful, by contrast, are 'outside', shut off from all peace and joy because of their sin. This two-fold differentiation corresponds to the traditional designations 'Abraham's Bosom' and 'Gehenna'.

With regard to the righteous it should also be noted that although Chrysostom speaks of them seeing God 'face to face', nowhere implying any belief in a period of purgation that must be endured as some sort of necessary preliminary to the attainment of what in later thought is known as the beatific vision, he nevertheless emphasises that this state is intermediate in nature; one that may be 'higher' and 'nearer' when compared with earthly existence but which is nonetheless not the perfection which will only be realised at the end of time in the fulness of the kingdom. Chrysostom thus considers prayer for the faithful departed to be entirely appropriate to their situation. Apart from being a practice (as he believes) engendered by the Apostles themselves, it is, in his opinion, a natural and laudable channel in which to realise the joy that ensues from the unity that exists between living and departed in the community of faith. It is, moreover, of

'great gain' and 'great benefit' to the dead. Quite what St. John Chrysostom means here is uncertain for he does not enlarge upon this aspect of his thought. Perhaps he envisaged some sort of spiritual growth, a deepening in love for God; but it would be unwise to speculate on this point.

With regard to those whom Chrysostom places 'outside the Palace', it is important to note that he includes among their number 'those who depart without the illumination, without the seal', by which he means those who have died unbaptized. The inclusion of the unbaptized with the reprobate is interesting for it provides yet another example of the way in which theology of the after-life was persistently having to be re-orientated and developed in accord with the changing situation which faced the Church. In the third century when the Christian Church was having to endure increasing hostility from the State and vehement persecution, her ranks had been strong in the sense that the positions of christian and pagan were clearly delineated. Martyrdom was frequent and highly venerated, quite often assuming a sacramental efficacy by virtue of its close association with the sacrificial death of Christ. Thus, one who had not been baptized in water could through martyrdom be considered to have been baptized 'in blood'. Indeed, so highly was martyrdom venerated that in some Church circles (and notably Tertullian) it could, as has been seen, be considered of sufficient virtue to merit immediate union with God. Similarly, the intercession of a martyr would be prized as having special efficacy - witness the case of St. Perpetua.

With the peace of the Church, the collapse of Paganism and the conversion of the Empire, persecution ceased and with it had come a re-orientation of existing theology, for the problem which had previously ~~then~~ confronted the Church was that of lapsed Christians. This problem in turn ~~which, of course~~, gave rise to the Novatianist schism. Initially presented itself in the very practical issue of trying to determine whether Christians who, having lapsed during the persecution, thus committing the mortal sin of

apostasy, ought to be re-admitted to the sacramental life of the Church. The repercussions of this simple question upon the theology of the after-life were manifold. For example, if the lapsed were refused participation in the sacramental life of the Church, were they to be deemed outside salvation? If so, should they be commemorated in the liturgy of the Church? Was there a possibility that they might yet be saved by some remedial punishment after death which would incorporate their penitential discipline?

Although these questions were still current in the time of Gregory of Nazianzus, by the time of St. John Chrysostom they were largely redundant. The situation had altered once more and in accordance with it we find Chrysostom labouring a new perspective. For the problem the Church had to deal with now was no longer the one of lapsed Christians but of 'semi-Christians.' With the establishment of Christianity in the Empire, the Church had been subjected to an influx of people who professed Christianity but who either did not practice it or who delayed their baptism till their death-bed in order to escape the rigors of a Christian morality. Faced with such laxity it is small wonder that Chrysostom is concerned to re-emphasise the importance of baptism. Procrastination in his opinion will only lead to damnation. There is no alternative. In one of his homilies on the Acts of the Apostles he states explicitly:

> The man who has cast all upon God, and sins after baptism, as we should expect of one that is mortal, if he repent shall obtain mercy; but he who prevaricates as it were with God's mercy, if he die without partaking of the grace, shall not have his punishment begged off. [116]

Baptism must not be delayed. This life is all-important for the decision of faith. Death is final and irrevocable. Consequently, there can be no hope of a change in state in the after-life 'for tell me, what hope is there, when our sins accompany us thither, where there is no putting off sins?' And where 'nought can be gained from repentance'. Chrysostom thus refutes any speculative thought about the possibility of a spiritual development and

change in state in the after-life and reaffirms the New Testament principle of the immediacy of the call to faith and the ultimate significance of any decision.

In view of Chrysostom's firm line on this matter one can understand why he is so determined to emphasise the fact that Christians pray only for those who have 'departed in faith' and not for dead pagans or nominal Christians who refuse baptism. Thus even catechumens, according to Chrysostom, are excluded from the prayers of the Church. His rigorism at this point whilst obviously a clear indication of existing Church practice is also an extension of his polemic against laxity in the Church, and in this respect it casts further light on the controversy between Aerius and Epiphanius which was considered earlier. For one of the arguments which Aerius put forward against the practice of praying for the departed was precisely that it gave prominence to the view that one's state could be improved in the hereafter and that therefore one's conduct in the present life was of little real consequence. The fact that Chrysostom is concerned to refute such thought by asserting correct Christian practice would seem to confirm the view that such opinions were abroad in certain Church circles.

Yet if Chrysostom was concerned to establish and enforce correct liturgical practice in his Church in accordance with the thought of the New Testament, as part of a wider drive to reinforce flaccid Christian standards, it is also apparent that he was equally concerned as a pastor to meet the practical demands of every situation and particularly the problems that arose through bereavement. Rigorism with Chrysostom never degenerates into mere intransigence. He demands the highest in Christian standards but at the same time offers the greatest compassion in dealing with individual cases. Faced with perhaps many cases of catechumens, for example, who died before they could receive baptism, he rightly found it impossible to offer the relatives of the deceased no hope for their loved ones; and accordingly one finds him

tempering his original words with thoughts that their lot might be improved by 'continually giving to the poor on their behalf'. Almsgiving on behalf of the dead was a common practice and as will be seen, one approved of by Augustine. It is difficult to tell whether Chrysostom, in accepting the practice, is thinking only of a possible alleviation of the sufferings of the departed or whether he is actually suggestihg that through the suffrages and alms of the living, some of the departed, theoretically outside salvation, will eventually attain to eternal blessedness. Whatever the case, it certainly would appear that although Chrysostom was consistent in his denial that the dead can of their own accord improve their state he was in some circumstances open to the possibility that their lot (or rather the lot of some of them) may be improved through the devotion of the living. His inconsistency on this matter is not to be wondered at though, for it reflected the inevitable tension which resulted from the inter-action of two opposing loyalties, namely his loyalty to the New Testament understanding of the significance of death and his loyalty to the demands made upon his pastoral sensitivity.

Another feature of St. John Chrysostom's thought, as yet unconsidered (for it receives only passing reference in the passage under discussion in which he talks 'of God willing that we should be mutually assisted') is his understanding of the importance of reciprocity in prayer. Admittedly, this is a subject which Chrysostom largely takes for granted, as do most Eastern theologians, ancient and modern, but occasionally it does receive open exposition in his sermons. For example, in his Homily on St. Meletius, Chrysostom exhorts his hearers thus:

> Let us pray then together ... taking the blessed Meletius as an associate in this our prayer (for his power is greater now, and his love towards us more fervent) that this love may increase in us. 117

This passage obviously reflects the belief that because Meletius was thought to be in the nearer presence of God, along with the

rest of the faithful departed, his prayer would as a matter of course, be of more avail. Yet if this is so, Chrysostom also stresses the essential unity of the prayer of all the faithful. Consequently, he is happy to commend the practice of invoking the faithful departed in prayer. For example, in one of his sermons, after encouraging the people to frequent the shrines of the martyrs whom he considered to have special'power', he says:

> Not on the day of this festival only, but also on other days, let us place ourselves beside them, let us beseech and implore them to become our patrons; for they have much boldness of speech, not merely when living, but also after death, yea, a great deal more after death. For now they bear the stigmata of Christ, and when they have pointed to these they can use all persuasion with the King. Seeing then that they have such influence and friendship with God, let us by our unfailing attendance and constant visiting of their shrines make ourselves as it were members of their household, and draw upon ourselves, through their intervention, the mercy of God; which may we all obtain by the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ. [118]

Similarly, in the course of a description of the greatness of the Kingdom of Christ, he can write as follows:

> The tombs of the servants of the crucified are more splended than the palaces of kings, not for the greatness and beauty of the buildings alone, though even here they surpass them, but, what is far more, in the zeal of those who frequent them. For even he who is clad in the purple himself goes to embrace those tombs, and laying aside his pride, stands entreating the saints to be his advocates with God, and he who has the diadem begs the tent-maker and the fisherman, even now that they are dead, to be his patrons. [119]

Indeed, in another homily he is so bold as to say:

> Knowing this, beloved, let us flee to the intercessions of the saints, and let us beseech them to pray for us; but let us not place confidence in their supplications alone, but order our own lives as is fit, and aim at constant improvement, that we may give full play to the intercession which is made on our behalf. [120]

Such strong words are easily misinterpreted when seen through the eyes of the Reformation for they appear to undermine the supremacy

of Christ, denying free access to God by placing other mediators between the faithful and God. This is, however, expressly denied by Chrysostom who elsewhere states categorically that:

> You have no need of mediators with God, or of much running to and fro and of flattering of others. But even if you be unbefriended and destitute of patrons; if you beseech God yourself by your own mouth, you shall certainly succeed. It is not his wont to assent, when others beseech him on our behalf, so much as when we are ourselves the petitioners, even though we be laden with innumerable ills. [121]

This puts all that has gone before in its proper perspective. Certainly from this utterance and from the whole tenor of this thought, we have no reason to suppose that such prayers were ever looked upon by Chrysostom as other than the charitable expression of the hope that sprang from Christian faith.

With St. John Chrysostom this picture of Eastern thought on the state of the departed is complete, for although a detailed survey could be extended into the middle of the seventh century to consider such theologians as Timothy of Alexandria[122] (? - 477) or more representatively, Maximus the Confessor (580 - 662), one tends to find only duplications of earlier thought with the same diversity of perspective and the same adamant refusal to dogmatize. Some writers for example adhere to a notion of an intermediate state in which the faithful departed are at rest until the Resurrection, when some of their number are perfected by the fiery trial of the great and terrible Day of the Lord - 'saved, as by fire'. Commenting on the theology behind this view, R.E. Hutton makes the point that 'the absence of guilt is by no means considered to be the same as the possession of sanctity. The one is a negative, the other a positive state.' [123] Other writers similarly look to a preliminary separation in the state of the departed following death, but envisage the faithful passing into Paradise (or whatever it be called) with all the holy dead, there to behold God in a state of unalloyed bliss that after the Resurrection would be so intensified as to become

a state of glory that admitted of no increase. Other writers still, influenced by the theology of Origen, speak of all the departed passing into an intermediate state of purification and progress, attaining Paradise after the Resurrection, or whenever the work of sanctification was completed.

Maximus the Confessor, for example, in accordance with his belief that the goal of the human life, attained through abnegation, is union with God by charity, does envisage such a process of purification. Maximus maintained that the purpose of history was the Incarnation of the Son of God and the divinization (θέωσις) of man, which consisted in the restoration of the Image impaired by Original Sin. Man, created in an incorruptible nature devoid of passion, caused evil to come into the world by his desire for pleasure, which destroyed the dominion of reason over the senses; hence Christ had to redeem the race by pain to restore the equilibrium. It was through the Incarnate Word, the centre of Maximus's speculative as of his mystical doctrine, that man is not only freed from ignorance but given the power to practise virtue, and so attain to the perfect love of God. Thus, 'in the future age, when some people must be judged and purified by fire', he considers this purification

> not to concern those who have arrived at the perfect love of God, but those who have not arrived at the complete perfection, and those whose virtues are polluted with sins. These will appear at the Judgement Seat, and, following the comparative examination of their good and bad deeds, they will be tested as if by fire. If on balance, the level of good works removes it (i.e. the testing by fire) then the bad will be expiated in just fear and pain.[124]

This is probably the closest one ever gets in Eastern theology to the later Western doctrine of Purgatory and it is perhaps notable that Maximus himself spent over twenty years in exile in Africa, following the Persian invasion in 626, the result of which was that he was greatly influenced by contemporary Western thought. So, one wonders to what extent one can justly speak of Maximus as being truly representative of Eastern thought about the state of the

departed and to what extent he is an amalgam of ideas. Maximus the Confessor aside, however, on a general note it would be true to say that whenever purgation is postulated in Eastern theology, it is admitted more of a possibility than a probability. Furthermore, whereas in the West, ideas about the state of the departed become enmeshed in logic and legality, and eventually terribly overburdened with notions of Divine coercion or punishment, Eastern Christianity, even where the possibility of suffering was entertained never loses its New Testament perspective, for 'the spirit of love always seems prevalent rather than the spirit of law.' [125]

And in this attitude the Eastern Orthodox Church, even to our own day, has remained constant, commemorating all the faithful departed in its liturgy but hesitating at any speculation in its theology of their state and refusing any more to dogmatise.[126] Perhaps it is fitting, therefore, that by way of summary, the last word in this section should rest with Alexis Khomiakoff (1804 - 1860) a Russian layman, whose words though written only a century ago, might just have easily been written of the attitude of Eastern Christianity in the third, fourth and fifth centuries. He writes as follows:

> Each person owes his prayers on behalf of all, the living and the dead, and even those who are as yet unborn ... we do not acknowledge Purgatory, that is the purification of souls by sufferings from which they may be redeemed by their own works or those of others ... But who will forbid us to pray God to glorify his saints and to give repose to his elect? [127]

CHAPTER 4

FOOTNOTES

1 See Daniélou, Origen ET London 1955 pp.73-98; 276-289. One of the difficulties in studying Origen is that a large proportion of his works, and not the least important, have been preserved not in the Greek text but in 4th century translations into Latin. This is the case with many of the homilies, several of the commentaries and, most serious of all, with much of the De Principiis.

2 De Principiis II 9. 8; Contra Celsum IV 9.

3 De Princ. II. 6.

4 Puto enim quod sancti quique discedentes ex hac vita permanebunt in loco aliquo in terra posito, quem paradisum dicit Scriptura divina, velut in quodam eruditionis loco, et, ut ita dixerim, auditorio vel schola animarum in quo de omnibus his quae in terris viderant, doceantur, indicia quoque quaedam accipiant etiam de consequentibus et futuris. (De Princ. ibid; DGCS XXII 190)

5 cf. Clement of Alexandria, Eclog. 57.5.

6 As has already been noted in previous chapters, the situation of Paradise is debated among the Fathers. Sometimes it was regarded as a heavenly region from which Adam had been ejected into this world. This was the view of Tertullian and Irenaeus. Tertullian in his de Anima 55. placed it 'under the altar' but the locality is not further defined. Hippolytus opposed those who placed Paradise in Heaven and insisted that it was on earth. From it Adam was ejected and it will once again become the future dwelling of the saints, who will enjoy the tree of life, which is Christ, with Adam and the righteous. (adv. Judaeos 2; de Antichr., 64)

7 Si qui sane mundus corde, et purior mente, et exercitatior sensu fuerit, velocius proficiens, cito et ad aeris locum ascendet, et ad caelorum regna perveniet per locorum singulorum, ut ita dixerim, mansiones; quas Graeci quidem σφαῖρας id est globos, appellaverunt, scriptura vero divina caelos nominat; in quibus singulis perspiciet primo quidem ea, quae inibi geruntur, secundo vero etiam rationem qvare gerantur agnascet; et ita per ordinem digredietur singula, sequens eum, qui penetravit caelos Iesum filium dei dicentem: 'Volo ut ubi ego sum, et isti sint mecum.' (De Princ., II 11. 6 ; DGCS XXII, 190; c.f., in Numb. Hom. XXVI, 31.)

8 Origen interprets this end spiritualistically. The primitive imagery of the Gospel is interpreted spiritually. The real meaning of the Parousia, according to Origen, is the manifestation of Christ and His divinity to all mankind, good and bad, which will result in the disclosure of their true character. The Saviour will not appear in any given place, but will make Himself known everywhere; and men will present themselves before His throne in the sense that they will render homage to His authority. They will see themselves as they are, and in the light of that knowledge the good and the bad will be finally differentiated. Needless to say, there is no room here for millenarianism. On Origen's doctrine of the apocatastasis, see below, Note 20 and text.

9 Nondum enim receperunt lactitiam suam, ne Apostoli quidem, sed et ipsi exspectant, ut et ego lactitae eorum particeps fiam. Neque enim discedentes hinc sancti, continuo integra meritorum suorum praemia consequuntur; sed exspectant etiam nos, licet morantes licet desides. Non enim est illis perfecta laetitia, donec pro erroribus nostris dolent et lugent nostra peccata. (In Levitic. Hom.VII 2; DGCS XXIX 377.)

10 For Origen, Christ is in no way locally circumscribed in heaven: 'He Himself is everywhere, and passes swiftly through all things; nor are we any longer to understand Him as existing in those narrow limits in which He was once confined for our sakes, that is, not in that circumscribed body which He occupied on earth, when dwelling among men, according to which He might be considered as enclosed in some one place.' (De Princ. II 11.6).

11 See Daniélou, op.cit., pp. 294f.

12 Daniélou traces this fusion of ideas from Philo through to Theophilus of Antioch and Clement of Alexandria, and thence to Origen.

13 Deus enim dispensat animas non ad istud solum vitae nostrae breve tempus, quod intra sexaginta fere aut si quid amplius annos concluditur, sed ad perpetuum et aeternum tempus, tamquam aeternus ipse et immortalis, immortalium quoque animarum providentiam tenens. Incorruptibilem namque fecit esse rationabilem naturam, quam et ad imaginem suam ac similitudinem condidit; et ideo non excluditur brevitate temporis huius vitae nostrae a cura et remediis divinis anima, quae immortalis est. (De Princ. III 1.13; DGCS XXII, 218). The Latin text is slightly different from the extant Greek version which I have followed:
θεὸς γὰρ οἰκονομεῖ τὰς ψυχὰς οὐχ ὡς πρὸς τὴν φέρ' εἰπεῖν πεντηκοντατείαν τῆς ἐνθάδε ζωῆς, ἀλλ' ὡς πρὸς τὸν ἀπέραντον αἰῶνα. ἄφθαρτον γὰρ φύσιν πεποίηκε τὴν νοερὰν καὶ αὐτῷ συγγενῆ, καὶ οὐκ ἀποκλείεται ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐνταῦθα ζωῆς ἡ λογικὴ ψυχὴ τῆς θεραπείας.

14 Origen believed that the Kingdom inherited by the righteous was the contemplation of the divine truth, and thus in his theology of the spiritual life, one is presented with an early distillation of the essence of contemplation. Indeed Daniélou has distinguished in Origen's thought what amounts to a description of the three ways, the purgative, the illuminative and the unitive (which in Eastern spirituality are more usually termed the ways of penitence, purification and perfection, as in the writings of St. Isaac the Syrian, for example. See: Vladimir Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, E.T. Cambridge, 1957. pp.196-235). And it is this thought that is reflected in Origen's thought about life after death.

15 Ego puto quod et post resurrectionem ex mortuis indigeamus sacramento elvente nos atque purgante; nemo enim absque sordibus resurgere poterit; nec ullam posse animam reperiri universis statim vitiis careat. (In Lucam Hom. XIV; DGCS, XXXV 99)

16 Et, ut ego arbitror, omnes nos Venire necesse est ad illum ignem. Etiamsi Paulus sit aliquis Vel Petrus, venit tamen ad illum ignem. Sed illi tales audiunt: 'etiamsi per ignem transeas, flamma non aduret te.' Si vero aliquis similis mei peccator sit, veniet quidem ad ignem illum sicut Petrus et Paulus, sed non sic transiet sicut Petrus et Paulus. (In Ps. 36 Hom.III, PG XII 1337)

17 Hom. Ez.12 cf. De Princ. II 10. 6.

18 Sed et aliam suppliciorum speciem intellegi arbitror posse, quia sicut quidem sentimus soluta corporis membra atque a suis invicem divulsa conpagibus inmensi doloris generare cruciatum, ita cum anima extra ordinem atque conpagem vel eam harmoniam, qua ad bene agendum et utiliter sentiendum a deo creata est, fuerit inventa nec sibimet ipsi rationabilium motuum conpagine consonare, poenam cruciatumque putanda sit suimet ipsius ferre discidii, et inconstantiae suae atque inordinationis sentire supplicium. Quae animae dissolutio atque divulsio cum adhibiti ignis ratione fuerit explorata, sine dubio ad firmiorem sui conpagem instaurationemque solidatur. (De Princ., II. 10. DGCS XXII, 179; cf., Contra Celsum IV.13.)

19 Hoc videtur indicari, quod unusquisque peccatorum flammam sibi ipse proprii ignis accendat, et non in aliquem ignem, qui antea iam fuerit accensus ab alio vel ante ipsum substiterit, demergatur, Cuius ignis esca atque materia sunt nostra peccata, quae ab apostolo Paulo ligna et facum et stipula nominantur ... Anima cum multitudinem malorum operum et abundantiam in se congregaverit peccatorum, conpetenti tempore omnis illa malorum congregatio effervescit ad

supplicium, atque inflammatur ad poenas; cum etiam mens ipsa vel conscientia per divinam virtutem omnia in memoriam recipiens, quorum in semet ipsa signa quaedam ac formas, cum peccaret, expresserat, et singulorum quae vel foede ac turpiter gesserat vel etiam impie commiserat, historiam quandam scelerum suorum ante oculos videbit expositam; tunc et ipsa conscientia propriis stimulis agitatur atque compungitur, et sui ipsa efficitur accusatrix et testis... Multa sunt etiam alia quae nos latent, quae illi soli cognita sunt, qui est medicus animarum nostrarum... Intellegendum est medicum nostrum deum volentem diluere vitia animarum nostrarum, quae ea peccatorum et scelerum diversitate collegerant, uti huiuscemodi poenalibus curis, insuper etiam ignis inferre supplicium his qui sanitatem animae perdiderunt? (De Princ., II 10. 4, 6; DGCS, XXII, 177f.)

20 De Princ. I. 2.11.

21 De Princ. III 6.3.

22 De Princ., II 10. 8.

23 Considering the speculative character of Origen's writings, as Swete points out (quoting Westcott) 'the silence of Origen as to the prayers of the living for the dead is most remarkable', especially when taken in connection with the fact that he repeatedly alludes to the belief that the dead pray for the living. See: Hom. in Nun., 26:6; Hom. in Jos., 16:5; De oratione XIV (H.B. Swete, 'Prayer for the Departed in the First Four Centures', JTS 8 (1907), p.505).

24 On the whole Origen is very decisive on this issue. Not once does he show the least semblance of doubt: 'Moreover whether the saints who being out of the body are with Christ, act and work at all for us, like the angels, who minister to our salvation; or whether again the wicked, who are out of the body, act at all according to the purpose of their mind, like the bad angels, with whom it is said by Christ they will be sent into the eternal fire, let this too be held among the secret things of God, mysteries that ought not to be committed to writing.' (Ep. ad Romanos Comment. II. 4).

25 δέησιν μὲν οὖν καὶ ἔντευξιν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν οὐκ ἄτοπον καὶ ἀνθρώποις ἁγίοις προσενεγκεῖν, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν δύο (λέγω δὴ ἔντευξιν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν), οὐ μόνον ἁγίοις, ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ (ἄλλοις) ἀνθρώποις. τὴν δὲ δέησιν μόνον ἁγίοις, εἴ τις εὑρεθείη Παῦλος ἢ Πέτρος ἵνα ὠφελήσωσιν ἡμᾶς ἀξίους ποιοῦντες τοῦ τυχεῖν τῆς δεδομένης αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίας πρὸς τὸ ἁμαρτήματα ἀφιέναι.
(De Oratione XIV, 6; DGCS III 333)

26 Πᾶσαν μὲν γὰρ δέησιν καὶ προσευχὴν καὶ ἔντευξιν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν ἀναπεμπτέον τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ διὰ τοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων ἀγγέλων ἀρχιερέως, ἐμψύχου λόγου καὶ θεοῦ
(Contra Celsum V.4; DGCS, III 4)

27 H.M. Luckock, After Death, London 1880. pp.187 - 8.

28 Omnes sancti qui de hac vita decesserunt, habentes adhuc caritatem erga eos qui in hoc mundo sunt, si dicantur curam gerere salutis eorum, et iuvare eos precibus suis, atque interventu suo apud Deum non erit inconveniens. Scriptum namque est in Maccabaeorum libris ita : hic est Hieremias propheta Dei, qui semper orat pro populo.
(In Cant. III. 4; PG.,XIII , 160.)

29 Ego sic arbitror, quod omnes illi qui dormierunt ante nos patres pugnent nobiscum et adiuvent nos orationibus suis. Ita namque etiam quemdam de senioribus magistris audivi dicentem. (In Jesu Nave, Hom. XVI 5; PG., XII 909.)

30 There are considerable theological difficulties in trying to argue from a general statement of belief that the Communion of Saints involves their continued fellowship with the living in prayer, to the specific declaration that the living may properly make specific requests to them. For example, do the living know what they are asking the Christian dead to do? We do not know much about their condition in order to know what precise expressions, words, or orientation of the will is appropriate in their case. Whilst it may be argued that it is not necessary to be very specific in order to conceive the possibility of praying for them, nevertheless to ask them to pray for the living makes many more specific assumptions - for example, that they are aware in detail of what is happening on earth; that they are in touch with the earthly Christian at his will and able to receive messages from him, whenever he is moved to send them; that the departed are able effectually to intercede for our specific and detailed needs.

31 That the Invocation of the Saints was a practice unknown in the earliest stages of Christianity is shown by the very same evidence which has been cited in earlier chapters to demonstrate the antiquity of praying for the dead. When Tertullian wishes to insist upon the authority of unwritten tradition he asks, among other things, what Scripture prescribes for the praying for the dead, which nevertheless he considers to have been inculcated by the Apostles. If he had known of the Invocation of Saints as a traditional practice of the Church, he could hardly have avoided alluding to it.

32 Contra Celsum VIII. 64.

33 See introduction P.5 and Note 5.

34 Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, ET., Cambridge 1957, p. 236; cf. pp. 8, 236. cf., Timothy Ware, The Orthodox Church, London 1963., p. 215.

35 See W.F. Macomber, 'The oldest known text of the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari', in Orientalia Christiana Periodica, 32 (1966), pp. 335 - 371; E.J. Cutrone, 'The Anaphora of the Apostles : Implications of the Mar Eŝha'ya Text', in TS., 34 (1973), pp. 624 - 642; Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, London 1945 pp. 178 - 187; Prayers of the Eucharist : Early and Reformed, ed., Jasper and Cuming, London 1975, pp. 26 - 28.

36 op. cit., p.26,

37 The authenticity of this (and other passages said by the priest privately) is disputed by some scholars. The translation given here is that of Jasper and Cuming, and corresponds to that recently found in the Church of Mar Esha'ya, Mosul, which was written in the eleventh or twelfth century, supplemented by other early manuscripts; and is to be preferred to that followed by earlier commentators (e.g. H.M. Luckock).

38 See earlier. C.3. p.97.

39 This work is addressed to readers in various states of life, especially married persons (c. 2 - 3), and deals with such subjects as the Bishop's duties, penance, liturgical worship, behaviour during persecution, widows and deaconesses, the settlement of disputes and the administration of offerings; but the arrangement is unmethodical and disorderly. It is especially directed against Christians who regard the Jewish ceremonial law as still binding. The author is far more lenient than his Western contemporaries (Tertullian or Cyprian) in allowing repentant sinners back to Communion. A six-days' fast before Easter is enjoined. The work, originally in Greek, survives complete only in a Syriac version, with substantial portions in Latin. As it was worked over and embodied in the later work Apostolic Constitutions, much of the Greek text can be reconstructed with tolerable certainty. Among the sources used are the Didache, the Ignatian epistles, St. Justin's 'Dialogue with Trypho' and the Sibylline Oracles (Bk.IV).

40 The date is disputed. ODCC says early 3rd. century (see p.401), but Swete says middle 4th. century. (See H.B. Swete, op.cit., p.506).

41 'In memoriis congregantes vos, et sacrarum scripturarum facite lectiones et ad D(eu)m preces indesinenter offerite, et eam quae secundum similitudine(m) regalis corporis Chr(ist)i est regalem eucharistiam offerte tam in collectis vestris qua(m) etiam in coemiteriis et in dormieuntiu(m) exinitione; panem mundum praeponentes qui per ignem factus est et per invocationem sanctificatur, sine discretione orantes offerite pro dormientibus'.

42 As has been noted, the clearest evidence for the existence of the practice is to be found in the writings of Tertullian where we read of eucharists for the departed on their anniversaries (de Cor., 3; de Monogam., 10.). Similarly in the Passio Perpetuae one is presented with evidence of African practice, and now in the latter half of the 3rd.century, there is the evidence of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (Ep., XXXIX. 3,) and at the end of the century, the evidence of the African Arnobius who speaks of the Christian churches' conventicula in which 'peace and pardon are asked for all' living and departed, (adversus Gentes IV 36). On Cyprian and Arnobius see Chapter 5.

43 Didascalia VI 22. For a full discussion of this evidence see Srawley, The Early History of the Liturgy, (2nd ed.) Cambridge, 1957, pp.79f.

44 As a result of the 'Constantinian Peace', there began a great mass-movement of people from all classes towards Christianity and for the first time Christian worship was subject to the full impact of Paganism. Although the Church preserved in her worship an attitude of great reserve towards Paganism, it was inevitable that she should take over from the surrounding world many elements which were of an indifferent nature and belonged simply to general culture. Among such elements were the language and the style of prayers. Unfortunately, time prevents an examination of this particular influence upon the liturgy of the Church with regard to prayers for the departed. See, however, J.A. Jungmann, The Early Liturgy, ET., London 1960. pp.125 - 8.

45 λεὼς δὲ παμπληθὴς σὺν τοῖς τῷ θεῷ ἱερωμένοις οὐ δακρύων ἐκτὸς σὺν κλαυθμῷ δὲ πλείονι τὰς εὐχὰς ὑπὲρ τῆς βασιλέως ψυχῆς ἀπεδίδοσαν τῷ θεῷ.

(Eusebius, Vita Const., IV 71; DGCS., VII 147)

46 The passages below are taken from the catecheses (lectures to candidates for baptism) and are traditionally ascribed to St. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem. If Cyril was indeed the author, the lectures will have been delivered c.350; but many modern scholars accept the attribution made in several

manuscripts to John II, Cyril's successor as bishop. In this case, the lectures cannot be earlier than 387. This dating certainly might explain some of its doctrinal viewpoints. The rite on which the author comments has affinities with both Egyptian and Syrian liturgies. See: F.L. Cross, St. Cyril of Jerusalem : Lectures, Oxford 1951; W. Telfer, Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa, (Library of Christian Classics, vol.4), 1955, pp. 19 - 63; A.A. Stephenson, The Works of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, (Fathers of the Church vol. 64), 1970, pp. 143 - 203; G.J. Cuming, 'Egyptian Elements in the Jerusalem Liturgy', in JTS 25 (1974), pp. 117 - 24; Prayers of the Eucharist : Early and Reformed, ed., Jasper and Cuming, London 1975, pp. 51 - 4.

47 In the Liturgies of St. James and St. Mark, and in the 'Clementine', there are similar commemorations of departed saints at this point, especially 'patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs', but nothing corresponding to the words, 'that at their prayers and intercessions God would receive our petition.' These liturgies embody only a general commemoration of the departed. For example, in the Liturgy of St. James, which belongs to the Antiochene family and which is especially associated with Jerusalem (it having several points of contact with the Catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem, and probably representing the result of conflating the earlier liturgies of Antioch and Jerusalem c. 400), in a Greek form of the Liturgy, after the reading of the diptychs of the dead, the priest proceeds:

> Remember, O Lord God, the spirits of all flesh, of whom we have made mention, and of whom we have not made mention who are of the true faith, from righteous Abel unto this day; do Thou thyself give them rest there in the land of the living, in thy Kingdom, in the delight of Paradise, in the bosom of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, our holy fathers; whence pain and grief and lamentation have fled away: there the light of thy countenance looks upon them, and gives them light for evermore.
> (μνήσθητι, Κύριε ὁ θεός, τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκός, ὧν ἐμνήσθημεν, καὶ ὧν οὐκ ἐμνήσθημεν, ὀρθοδόξων, ἀπὸ Ἄβελ τοῦ δικαίου μέχρι τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας. αὐτὸς ἐκεῖ αὐτοὺς ἀνάπαυσον ἐν χώρᾳ ζώντων, ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου, ἐν τῇ τρυφῇ τοῦ παραδείσου, ἐν τοῖς κόλποις Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ, τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ἡμῶν. ὅθεν ἀπέδρα ὀδύνη λύπη καὶ στεναγμός; ἔνθα ἐπιλάμπει τὸ φῶς τοῦ προσώπου σου καὶ καταλαμπεῖ διὰ παντός.

Lit. S. Jacobi Graecorum; Brightman, Liturgies Eastern and Western, vol. 1. Oxford, 1896, p. 57.)

The text used here by Brightman is a 14th century manuscript from Thessalonica (Paris Bibl. Nat. gr. 2509); the text used by Jasper and Cuming (op.cit., p. 59) is an earlier one

dating from the 9th century, which originated in the neighbourhood of Damascus (Vatican MS gr. 2282). This latter text, though earlier, has a much longer intercession at this point.

48 μνημονεύωμεν καὶ τῶν προκεκοιμημένων .... ὅπως ὁ θεὸς ταῖς εὐχαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ πρεσβείαις προσδέξηται ἡμῶν τὴν δέησιν. εἶτα καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν προκεκοιμημένων ἁγίων πατέρων, καὶ ἐπισκόπων, καὶ πάντων ἁπλῶς τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν προκεκοιμημένων, μεγίστην ὄνησιν πιστεύοντες ἔσεσθαι ταῖς ψυχαῖς, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἡ δέησις ἀναφέρεται τῆς ἁγίας καὶ φρικωδεστάτης προκειμένης θυσίας.

(Catech. Lecture XXII. (Mystag. V), 9; PG., XXXIII 1116)

49 though see above, note 44 & 46.

50 Justin Martyr, Dial. Try., 80.

51 Irenaeus, Haer.,V. 31.

52 Tertullian, de Anima 55; de Res. Carn., 43.

53 Origen, Hom. in Lev. VII. 2.

54 Timothy Ware, The Orthodox Church, London 1963, p. 258. Or as Khomiakov has commented (The Church is One, section 1): 'It is only in relation to man that it is possible to recognize a division of the church into visible and invisible; its unity is, in reality, true and absolute. Those who are alive on earth, those who have finished their earthly course, those who, like the angels, were not created for a life on earth, those in future generations who have not yet begun their earthly course, are all united together in one church, in one and the same grace of God .... The church, the Body of Christ, manifests forth and fulfils itself in time, without changing its essential unity or inward life of grace. And therefore, when we speak of "the church visible and invisible", we so speak only in relation to man.' (quoted by Ware, p.247). By contrast, in the West the view gradually prevailed that all the saints, whether martyrs or not, are already reigning with Christ, and therefore ought not to be prayed for. The East, however, has always desired to emphasise the unity of all the faithful, living and departed, in Christ, a unity in which adoration and mutual prayer have their place. As A.C. Headlam has commented of the Russian Church: 'Often, when a child who has lost its mother is praying, he may be heard adding her name to those of the other saints whom he asks to pray for him. Mutual prayer of the dead for the living, of the living for the dead, and of both for the whole Church, is to the Russian the

bond which links together the Church in one Communion of Saints.' (A.D. Headlam, The Teaching of the Russian Church, p.20., quoted in 'Invocation of the Saints', CQR., 47, (1899), p. 287.)

55 The Liturgy of St. Mark in its final, 13th century form exhibits a rite to which substantial additions had been made from the liturgies of St. Basil and St. James. An early edition of this rite appears in a Coptic translation (Anaphora of St. Cyril) made soon after 451. This lacks certain elements which appear in the later Greek text. But it is possible to reconstruct an almost complete anaphora of an even earlier date by piecing together early Greek and Coptic fragments. The characteristic structure of Egyptian anaphoras has the Intercessions inserted into the middle of the Preface, and an epiclesis to link the Sanctus to the Institution narrative.

56 The prayer is as follows: (words and phrases absent from the Coptic are in square brackets)

> Give rest [Lord our God,] to the souls of our fathers and brothers who have fallen asleep [in the faith of Christ,] remembering our forefathers from the beginning, the fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, [holy men,] righteous men, every spirit perfected in the faith [of Christ], and those of whom we make mention today, and our holy father Mark the apostle and evangelist, [who showed us the way of salvation.] (See Brightman, op.cit., p.128; Jasper and Cuming, op.cit., p.45).

Although this text is of comparately late derivation, the authenticity of its thought is supported by an earlier fragment recovered during this century. The Strasbourg Papyrus (Strasbourg, gr. 254) is probably 4th century and shows the Anaphora of St. Mark in its earliest known form. The relevant passage is as follows: (question marks represent a conjectural restoration; dots represent a gap which might be filled in more than one way).

> Give rest to the souls of those who have fallen asleep; remember those of whom we make mention today, both those whose names we say (and) whose we do not say ... our orthodox holy fathers and bishops everywhere; and grant us to have a part and lot with the fair ... of your holy prophets, apostles, and martyrs. Receive (?)... their entreaties ... grant them through our Lord, through whom be glory to you to the ages of ages. (Jasper and Cuming, op.cit., p.38)

This text should be compared with that of Serapion.

57 Vladimir Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, ET., Cambridge 1957, p. 189.

58 καὶ τούτων πάντων τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνάπαυσον δέσποτα κύριε ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἁγίων σου σκηναῖς, ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου, χαριζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ τῶν ἐπαγγελιῶν σου ἀγαθά ἃ ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν καὶ οὖς οὐκ ἤκουσεν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπων οὐκ ἀνέβη ἃ ἡτοίμασας ὁ θεὸς τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸ ὄνομά σου τὸ ἅγιον. αὐτῶν μὲν τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνάπαυσον καὶ βασιλείας οὐρανῶν καταζίωσον.

See Brightman, op.cit.,p.129.

59 οἶδα γὰρ πολλοὺς ταῦτο λέγοντας: Τί ὠφελεῖται ψυχὴ μετὰ ἁμαρτημάτων ἀπαλλασσομένη τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου, ἢ οὐ μεθ' ἁμαρτημάτων, ἐὰν ἐπὶ τῆς προσευχῆς μνημονεύηται.

(Catech. Lecture XXIII (Mystag V) 10; PG., XXXIII 1116.)

60 τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑπὲρ τῶν κεκοιμημένων τὰς δεήσεις προσφέροντες, κἂν ἁμαρτωλοί ὦσιν, οὐ στέφανον πλέκομεν, ἀλλὰ Χριστὸν ἐσφαγιασμένον ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμέτερων ἁμαρτημάτων προσφέρομεν, ἐξιλεούμενοι ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν τὸν φιλάνθρωπον.

(ibid).

61 The vagueness of Cyril's thought at this point does not allow the application of traditional Catholic terminology of 'venial sin' and 'mortal sin' to his thought.

62 The Testament of Our Lord does not bear any literary connection with the Didascalia, though it does reflect the thought of the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus.

63 Testament of Our Lord. ii.5, (compare with Didascalia - see p.133).

64 Op.cit., i.23.

65 Op.cit., i.35.

66 Op.cit., ii.15, 23.

67 Has been dated as 350 by Srawley, (The Early History of the Liturgy, 2nd. ed. rev. Cambridge 1957, p.56) following the work of F.E. Brightman ('The Sacramentary of Serapion', JTS., 1 (1899 - 1900), pp. 88 - 113, 247 - 276.) This is supported by recent commentators, e.g., Jasper and Cuming, Op.cit., p. 33.

68 The contents of the Sacramentary as they have come down to us in extant manuscripts are not arranged in any proper

order; the elements of several rites being scattered up and down. So far as regards the rites generally, the whole has been re-distributed by Brightman (op.cit., p.89) as follows:

1. The Liturgy (19-30, 1-6)
2. The Order of Baptism and Confirmation (7-11, 15, 16)
3. Ordinations (12-14)
4. Unction of the Sick (17)
5. Burial of the Dead (18)

Brightman orders the liturgical sections (19-30; 1-6) as follows:

1. First Prayer of Sunday (19)
2. Prayer after Rising from the Sermon (20)
3. Prayer for the Catechumens (21)
4. Blessing of the Catechumens. (28)
5. Prayer for the People (27)
6. Blessing of the People (29)
7. Prayer for the Sick (22)
8. Blessing of the Sick (30)
9. Prayer for Harvest (23)
10. Prayer for the Church (24)
11. Prayer for the Bishop and the Church (25) - this incorporates the commemoration of the departed.
12. Prayer for Genuflection (26)
13. Prayer of Offering of Bishop Serapion (1)
14. Fraction and Prayer during the Fraction (2)
15. Blessing of the People after the Communion of the Clergy (3)
16. Prayer after the Communion of the People (4)
17. Prayer over the Offerings of Oils and Waters (5)
18. Blessing after the Blessing of Water and Oil (6)

69 παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων τῶν κεκοιμημένων, ὧν ἐστιν καὶ ἡ ἀνάμνησις (μετὰ τὴν ὑποβολὴν τῶν ὀνομάτων)
ἁγίασον τὰς ψυχὰς ταύτας, οὐ γὰρ πάσας γινώσκεις. ἁγίασον πάσας τὰς ἐν Κυρίῳ κοιμηθείσας καὶ συγκαταρίθμησον πάσαις ταῖς ἁγίαις σου δυνάμεσιν, καὶ δὸς αὐταῖς τόπον καὶ μονὴν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

(Serapion. 1. Brightman, op.cit., p.106, 25-32)

70 This is the earliest extant document unless the Strasbourg Papyrus is earlier. (See on this, above note 56). On Serapion, see: Edmund Bishop, 'The Diptychs', Appendix III, in 'The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai' edited by R.H.Connolly, in Texts and Studies, VIII (i), Cambridge 1909, pp.97-117.

71 Bishop, op.cit., p.101.

72 Ibid., p.102. In recent years, however, this view has been opposed. Apart from the obvious dispute over the authorship and possible later dating of the Catecheses, it has been

contended by many scholars and notably G.J. Cuming ('Egyptian Elements in the Jerusalem Liturgy', JJS, 25 (1974), pp. 117-24), that the prayers of Serapion and the Egyptian rite which he reflects, far from being an importation from Jerusalem, actually represent the formative influence on the Jerusalem liturgy! It is the contention of Cuming (p.123) against Brightman and Bishop, that at the beginning of the 4th century Egypt and Jerusalem were using essentially the same rite, which differed from that in use in Antioch. During the course of the century innovations in theology and structure appear at Jerusalem, (was the public recitation of the names of the departed one of them?) which are also found at Antioch in the closing years of the century. These, Cuming argues, are then combined with the existing Antioch rite to form the Liturgy of St. James. The same tendency operates in Egypt, at first partially in the prayers of Serapion, and later when large portions of St. James are incorporated in the Liturgy of St. Mark, thus bringing the wheel full circle. The Jacobite rites retained traces, however, of the Egyptian liturgy, which was the initial influencing factor in the chain of developments.

73 The position of the African church will be dealt with separately in the next chapter.

74 The question of offering by the people is dealt with in Canons 28 & 29 of the Council of Elvira, and this question is the occasion of the mention (which is incidental only) of the recital of names of 'offerers'.

> Canon XXVII: De oblationibus eorum qui non communicant. Episcopos placuit ab eo qui non communicat munus accipere non debere.
>
> Canon XXIX: De energumenis qualiter habeantur in ecclesia. Energumenus qui ab erratico spiritu exagitatur, huius nomen neque ad altare cum oblatione esse recitandum, nec permittendum ut suo manu in ecclesia ministret.
>
> (Bishop, op.cit., p.98, note 2.)

75 Bishop, op. cit., p.99.

76 The public recital of names of dead Christians would seem to have been introduced into the mass in the East some time in the course of the 4th century. Before long this observance became involved in the troublesome matter of 'orthodoxy'. Only the orthodox were to be commemorated. The case of St. John Chrysostom in the generation following his death is an interesting one (see Bishop op.cit., p.102f), his name sometimes being commemorated and at other times being erased from the diptychs according to local sentiment. This illustrates the way in which all the faithful departed were commemorated in the practice of the East.

77 op.cit., p.114 supplementary note.

78 On the relation of this prayer to known early Christian burial custom, see Bishop, op.cit., p.262.

79 Ὁ θεὸς ὁ ζωῆς καὶ θανάτου τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἔχων, ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ δεσπότης πάσης σαρκός, ὁ θεὸς ὁ θανατῶν καὶ ζωογονῶν, ὁ κατάγων εἰς πύλας ἅδου καὶ ἀνάγων, ὁ κτίζων πνεῦμα ἀνθρώπου ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ παραλαμβάνων τῶν ἁγίων τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ ἀναπαύων. ὁ ἀλλοιῶν καὶ μεταβάλλων καὶ μετασχηματίζων τὰ κτίσματά σου καθὼς δίκαιον καὶ σύμφορόν ἐστιν, μόνος αὐτὸς ἄφθαρτος καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος καὶ αἰώνιος ὤν. δεόμεθά σου περὶ τῆς κοιμήσεως καὶ ἀναπαύσεως τοῦ δούλου σου τοῦδε (ἢ τῆς δούλης σου τῆσδε). τὴν ψυχήν, τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἀνάπαυσον ἐν τόποις χλόης, ἐν ταμείοις ἀναπαύσεως μετὰ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακὼβ καὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων σου, τὸ δὲ σῶμα ἀνάστησον ἐν ᾗ ὡρισας ἡμέρᾳ κατὰ τὰς ἀψευδεῖς σου ἐπαγγελίας, ἵνα καὶ τὰς κατ' ἀξίαν αὐτῷ κληρονομίας ἀποδῷς ἐν ταῖς ἁγίαις σου αὐλαῖς. τῶν παραπτωμάτων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἁμαρτημάτων μὴ μνησθῇς, τὴν δὲ ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ εἰρηνικὴν καὶ εὐλογημένην εἶναι ποίησον. τὰς λύπας τῶν διαφερόντων πνεύματι παρακλήσεως ἴασαι καὶ ἡμῖν πᾶσι τέλος ἀριθὸν δώρησαι. διὰ τοῦ μονογενοῦς σου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ σοι ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

ἀμήν.

ch.XXX

(Serapion λ(18); see Bishop, op.cit., p.268)

80 Of its eight books, books I to VI of the Apostolic Constitutions are based on the Didascalia; VII. 1-32 on the Didache; VII. 33-49 is liturgical material; VIII 1-2 may be connected with Hippolytus' 'Concerning Spiritual Gifts'; VIII. 3-27 is an elaborate version of the Antiochene Liturgy sometimes referred to as the 'Clementine Liturgy'. VIII. 28-46 are canons; while VIII. 47. is the 'Apostolic Canons', perhaps added to the work later.

81 Ἔτι προσφέρομέν σοι καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος εὐαρεστησάντων σοι ἁγίων, πατριαρχῶν, προφητῶν, δικαίων, ἀποστόλων, μαρτύρων, ὁμολογητῶν, ἐπισκόπων, πρεσβυτέρων, διακόνων, ὑποδιακόνων, ἀναγνωστῶν, ψαλτῶν, παρθένων, χηρῶν, λαϊκῶν καὶ πάντων ὧν ἐπίστασαι αὐτὸς τὰ ὀνόματα.

Apostolic Constitutions VIII. 12α (also quoted in Hammond, Liturgies Eastern and Western vol. 1. ed. Brightman, p.21., and in Jasper and Cuming, op.cit., p.72).

82 ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναπαυσαμένων, μετὰ τὸ προσφωνῆσαι τὰ τῆς πρώτης εὐχῆς ἵνα μὴ πάλιν λέγωμεν, ὁ διάκονος προσθήσει καὶ ταῦτα .... ὑπὲρ ἀναπαυσαμένων ἐν Χριστῷ ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν δεηθῶμεν. ὅπως ὁ φιλάνθρωπος θεὸς ὁ προσδεξάμενος αὐτοῦ τὴν ψυχήν, παρείδῃ αὐτῷ πᾶν ἁμάρτημα ἑκούσιον καὶ ἀκούσιον, καὶ ἵλεως καὶ εὐμενὴς γενόμενος, κατατάξῃ εἰς χῶραν εὐσεβῶν, ἀνειμένων εἰς κόλπον Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ, μετὰ πάντων ...

(Apostolic Constitutions VIII, 41;
text: Library of Greek Fathers and Ecclesiastical Authorities, vol. 2., Athens 1955, p. 168.)

83 ὁ θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ, ὁ θεὸς Ἰσαὰκ καὶ ὁ θεὸς Ἰακώβ, οὐκ ὡς νεκρῶν, ἀλλ' ὡς ζώντων θεὸς εἶ ὅτι πάντων αἱ ψυχαὶ παρὰ σοὶ ζῶσιν, καὶ τῶν δικαίων τὰ πνεύματα ἐν τῇ χειρί σου εἰσίν, ὧν οὐ μὴ ἅψηται βασανισμός. πάντες γὰρ ἡγιασμένοι ὑπὸ τὰς χεῖράς σου εἰσίν, αὐτὸς καὶ νῦν ἔπιδε ἐπὶ τὸν δοῦλόν σου τόνδε ὃν ἐξελέξω καὶ προσελάβου εἰς ἑτέραν λῆξιν, καὶ συγχώρησον αὐτῷ εἴτε ἑκὼν ἢ ἄκων ἐξήμαρτεν, καὶ ἄγγελος εὐμενεῖς παράστησον αὐτῷ. καὶ κατάταξον αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τῶν πατριαρχῶν καὶ τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνός σοι εὐαρεστησάντων, ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι λύπη καὶ ὀδύνη καὶ στεναγμός. ἀλλὰ χῶρος εὐσεβῶν ἀνειμένος καὶ γῆ εὐθέων σοὶ ἀνειμένη καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ὁρώντων τὴν δόξαν τοῦ χριστοῦ σου, μεθ' οὗ σοὶ δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ σέβας, εὐχαριστία καὶ προσκύνησις καὶ ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.
ἀμήν.

(ibid.)

84 (ibid.) VIII, 42.
The sixth book of the Constitutions repeats the directions of the Didascalia about the commemorations of the departed and eucharists held in cemeteries.
(Apostolic Constit. VI. 30)

85 Apost. Const. VIII, 43.

86 Aerius also seems to have maintained that there was no distinction between the function and rank of bishops and priests; that the observance of Easter was a Jewish superstition; that prescribed fasts were wrong.
See Epiphanius, Haer., 75.

87 St. Philaster (Haer., 72) also mentions Aerius or rather his followers (Aerians) who seemed to have died out soon after their leader's death.

88 Augustine, De Haeresibus, 53.

89 The Panarion which means 'medicine chest ', preserves many extracts from works no longer extant. Hereafter it will be cited in the abbreviated form Haer.

90

Τίνι τῷ λόγῳ μετὰ θάνατον ὀναμάζετε, φησίν, ὀνόματα τεθνεώτων; (εἰ) εὔχεται γάρ φησίν, ὁ ζῶν, ἢ οἰκονομίαν ἐποίησε, τί ὠφεληθήσεται ὁ τεθνεώς; εἰ δὲ ὅλως εὐχὴ τῶν ἐνταῦθα τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ὤνησεν, ἄρα γοῦν μηδεὶς εὐσεβείτω μηδὲ ἀγαθοποιείτω, ἀλλὰ κτησάσθω φίλους τινάς, δι' οὗ βούλεται τρόπου, ἤτοι χρήμασι πείσας, ἤτοι φίλους ἀξιώσας ἐν τῇ τελευτῇ, καὶ εὐχέσθωσαν περὶ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μή τι ἐκεῖ πάθῃ, μηδὲ τὰ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γενόμενα τῶν ἀνηκέστων ἁμαρτημάτων ἐκζητηθῇ.
(Haer., 75, 2; DGCS, XXXVII 335)

91

Ἔπειτα δὲ περὶ τοῦ ὀνόματα λέγειν τῶν τελευτησάντων, τί ἂν εἴη τούτου προυργιαίτερον; τί τούτου καιριώτερον καὶ θαυμαστιώτερον; πιστεύειν μὲν τοὺς παρόντας, ὅτι οἱ ἀπελθόντες ζῶσι καὶ ἐν ἀνυπαρξίᾳ οὐκ εἰσίν, ἀλλὰ εἰσὶ καὶ ζῶσι παρὰ τῷ δεσπότῃ.

(Haer., 75, 7; DGCS, XXXVII 338)

92

ὠφελεῖ δὲ καὶ ἡ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν γινομένη εὐχή, εἰ καὶ τὰ ὅλα τῶν αἰτιαμάτων μὴ ἀποκόπτοι, ἀλλ' οὖν γε διὰ τὸ πολλάκις ἐν κόσμῳ ἡμᾶς ὄντας σφάλλεσθαι ἀκουσίως τε καὶ ἑκουσίως, ἵνα τὸ ἐντελέστερον σημανθῇ. καὶ γὰρ δικαίων ποιούμεθα τὴν μνήμην καὶ ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτωλῶν. ὑπὲρ μὲν ἁμαρτωλῶν ὑπὲρ ἐλέους θεοῦ δεόμενοι
... etc., (Haer., 75, 7; DGCS XXXVII 339)

93

ἡ μήτηρ ἡμῶν ἡ ἐκκλησία εἶχε θεσμοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ κειμένους ἀλύτους, μὴ δυναμένους καταλυθῆναι (ibid.)

94 The voluminous exegetical, dogmatic, controversial and ascetical writings of St. Ephraem are mostly in verse. Their inspiration is Scriptural throughout, but their style, characterized by repetitions and the accumulation of metaphors, is alien to modern taste, though it was much appreciated by his Syrian contemporaries. He wrote exclusively in Syriac, but his works were translated into Armenian and

Greek at a very early date, and via the latter into Latin and Slavonic.

95 Unde a te deposco, O sancta atque fidelis et beata, ora pro me sanctos dicens: intercedite O triumphatores Christi, pro minimo ac miserabili Ephraem, ut misericordiam inveniam Christique gratia salvus fiam. (Hom. in quadraginta martyres).

96 Obtestamur igitur vos, O sanctissimi martyres .... ut pro nobis miseris peccatoribus negligentiae squalore obsitis Dominum deprecemini ut divinam suam in nos infundat gratiam quae corda nostra sanctae caritatis radio iugiter illustret .... vos et enim vere nunc beati et gloriosi estis quos angeli pariter et homines una voce et consensu felices et beatos praedicant.(ibid).

97 Opera Omnia ed., J. Garnier, Paris 1839, vol. II. p. 219, B.

98 Δέχομαι δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἁγίους ἀποστόλους προφήτας καὶ μάρτυρας, καὶ εἰς τὴν πρὸς θεὸν ἱκεσίαν τούτους ἐπικαλοῦμαι, τοῦ δι' αὐτῶν, ἤγουν διὰ τῆς μεσιτείας αὐτῶν, ἵλεών μοι γενέσθαι τὸν φιλάνθρωπον θεὸν, καὶ λύτρον μοι τῶν πταισμάτων γενέσθαι καὶ δοθῆναι.

(Ep., CCCLX; PG., XXXII 1100)

99 τὴν Παρθένον Μαρίαν ἱκετεύουσα βοηθῆσαι παρθένῳ κινδυνευούσῃ (Orat. in laud. S. Cyriani Mart. (XXIV) 11; PG., XXXV., 1181)

100 σὺ δὲ ἡμᾶς ἐποπτεύοις ἄνωθεν ἵλεως, καὶ τὸν ἡμέτερον διεξάγοις λόγον καὶ βίον, καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τοῦτο ποίμνιον ποιμαίνοις ἢ συμποιμαίνοις, τά τε ἄλλα εὐθύνων ὡς οἷόν τε πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον καὶ τοὺς βαρεῖς λύκους ἀποπεμπόμενος, τοὺς θηρευτὰς τῶν συλλαβῶν καὶ τῶν λέξεων· καὶ τὴν τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος ἔλλαμψιν, ἧς σὺ νῦν παραστάτης, τελεωτέραν τε καὶ λαμπροτέραν ἡμῖν χαριζόμενος, ἣν προσκυνοῦμεν, ἣν δοξάζομεν.
(ibid., 19; PG., XXXV, 1193)

101 σὺ δὲ ἡμᾶς ἐποπτεύοις ἄνωθεν, ὦ θεία καὶ ἱερὰ κεφαλὴ, καὶ τὸν δεδομένον ἡμῖν παρὰ θεοῦ σκόλοπα τῆς σαρκὸς, τὴν ἡμετέραν παιδαγωγίαν, ἢ στήσαις ταῖς σεαυτοῦ πρεσβείαις, ἢ πείσαις καρτερῶς φέρειν.

(Funeb. Orat. in laud. Basilii Magni, XLIII 82; PG., XXXVI 604)

102 καὶ νῦν ὁ μὲν ἐστιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς, κἀκεῖ τὰς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ὡς οἶμαι, προσφέρων θυσίας, καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ προσευχόμενος. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπολιπὼν ἡμᾶς, παντάπασιν ἀπολέλοιπεν.
(ibid., 80; PG., XXXVI 601)

103 Πείθομαι δ'ὅτι καὶ τῇ πρεσβείᾳ νῦν μᾶλλον, ἢ πρότερον τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, ὅσῳ καὶ μᾶλλον ἐγγίζει θεῷ, τὰς σωματικὰς πέδας ἀποσειόμενος, καὶ τῆς ἐπιθολούσης τὸν νοῦν ἰλύος ἀπηλλαγμένος, καὶ γυμνῷ γυμνὸς ἐντυγχάνων τῷ πρώτῳ καὶ καθαρωτάτῳ νοί, τάξεως καὶ παῤῥησίας ἀγγελικῆς, εἰ μὴ τολμηρὸν τοῦτο εἰπεῖν, ἀξιούμενος.

(Funeb. Orat. in Pat., XVIII) 4; PG XXXV 989)

104 τυχὸν ἐκεῖ τῷ πυρὶ βαπτισθήσονται τῷ τελευταίῳ βαπτίσματι, τῷ ἐπιπονωτέρῳ τε καὶ μακροτέρῳ, ὃ ἐσθίει ὡς χόρτον τὴν ὕλην, καὶ δαπανᾷ πάσης κακίας κουφότητα.

(Orat. in Sancta Lumin., (XXXIX) 19; PG., XXXVI 357)

105 See Justin Mossay, La Mort et l'au-dela dans Saint Grégoire de Nazianze, Louvain 1966. esp. pp.107f.

106 On the 'Origenism' of Gregory of Nyssa, see William Moore's article in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, V edited by Moore & Wilson, Oxford 1893, pp. 14 - 23. Compare Gregory's account of the refiner's fire with that of Origen (Contra Cels., VI 44).

107 τρόπον τῶν μακρῶν περιόδοις ἐξαιρεθέντος τοῦ κακοῦ τῆς φύσεως ... ἐπειδὰν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκατάστασις τῶν νῦν ἐν κακίᾳ κειμένων γένηται, ὁμόφωνος ἡ εὐχαριστία παρὰ πάσης ἔσται τῆς κτίσεως, καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ καθάρσει κεκολασμένων, καὶ τῶν μηδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπιδεηθέντων καθάρσεως.

(Or. Catech. XXVI; PG., XLV, 69)

108 De Anima et Resurrec.

109 De infantibus qui praemature abripiuntur (Nicene & Post Nicene Fathers V. p. 374).

110 See De Anima et Resurrec. (Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers. V. p.451).

111 Οὐ γὰρ ὅσα δι' ἀναστάσεως τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ εἶναι πάλιν ἐπάνοδον δέχεται, πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν ἐπάνεισι βίον. Ἀλλὰ πολὺ τὸ μέσον τῶν τε κεκαθαρμένων, καὶ τῶν τοῦ καθαρσίου προσδεομένων ἐστίν. Ἐφ' ὧν γὰρ κατὰ τὸν βίον τοῦτον ἡ διὰ τοῦ λουτροῦ προκαθηγήσατο κάθαρσις, πρὸς τὸ συγγενὲς τούτοις ἀναχώρησις ἔσται. Τῷ δὲ καθαρῷ τὸ ἀπαθὲς προσωκείωται, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀπαθείᾳ τὸ μακάριον εἶναι οὐκ ἀμφιβάλλεται. Οἷς δὲ προσεπιωρώθη τὰ πάθη, καὶ οὐδὲν προσήχθη τῆς κηλίδος καθάρσιον, οὐχ ὕδωρ μυστικόν, οὐκ ἐπίκλησις θείας δυνάμεως, οὐχ ἡ ἐκ μεταμελείας ὄρθωσις, ἀνάγκη πᾶσα, καὶ τούτους ἐν τῷ καταλλήλῳ γενέσθαι. Κατάλληλον δὲ τῷ κεκιβδηλευμένῳ χρυσίῳ τὸ χωνευτήριον, ὡς τῆς ἐμμιχθείσης αὐτοῖς κακίας ἀποτακείσης, μακροῖς μοτέρον αἰῶσι καθαρὰν ἀποσωθῆναι τῷ θεῷ τὴν φύσιν. Ἐπεὶ οὖν ῥυπτική τίς ἐστι δύναμις ἐν τῷ πυρὶ καὶ τῷ ὕδατι, οἱ διὰ τοῦ ὕδατος τοῦ μυστικοῦ τὸν τῆς κακίας ῥύπον ἀποκλυσάμενοι τοῦ ἑτέρου τῶν καθαρσίων εἴδους οὐκ ἐπιδέονται. Οἱ δὲ ταύτης ἀμύητοι τῆς καθάρσεως ἀναγκαίως τῷ πυρὶ καθαρίζονται.

(Or. Catech., XXXV; PG., XLV., 92)

112 J.H. Srawley, The Catechetical Oration of Gregory of Nyssa, Cambridge 1903, p.139, & A.J. Mason, Purgatory, The State of the Faithful Departed and the Invocation of Saints, London, 1901, p.19f, opposed by Michel in DTC ibid., 1201.

113 De anima et resurrec. (Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, V. p.452f.)

114 Οὐ γὰρ ἁπλῶς ταῦτα ἐπινενόηται, οὐδὲ εἰκῇ μνήμην ποιούμεθα τῶν ἀπελθόντων ἐπὶ τῶν θείων μυστηρίων, καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν πρόσιμεν, δεόμενοι τοῦ Ἀμνοῦ τοῦ κειμένου τοῦ λαβόντος τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλ' ἵνα τις ἐντεῦθεν αὐτοῖς γένηται παραμυθία. οὐδὲ μάτην ὁ παρεστὼς τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ τῶν φρικτῶν μυστηρίων τελουμένων βοᾷ. Ὑπὲρ πάντων τῶν ἐν Χριστῷ κεκοιμημένων καὶ τῶν τὰς μνείας ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐπιτελούντων. Εἰ γὰρ μὴ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν αἱ μνεῖαι ἐγένοντο, οὐδ' ἂν ταῦτα ἐλέχθη. Θὺ γὰρ ἐστι σκηνὴ τὰ ἡμέτερα, μὴ γένοιτο. Πνεύματος γὰρ διατάξει ταῦτα γίνεται.

(In Ep.i ad Cor. Hom. XLI 4; PG LXI, 361.)

115 Τὰ μετὰ θάνατον, ἢ καλὰ ἢ κακά. Μὴ ποίνυν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀποθνήσκουσι πενθῶμεν ἁπλῶς, μηδὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς ζῶσι χαίρωμεν ἁπλῶς. Ἀλλὰ τί; Πενθῶμεν τοὺς ἁμαρτωλοὺς μὴ ἀποθνήσκοντας μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ζῶντας. Χαίρωμεν δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς δικαίοις, μὴ ζῶσι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τετελευτηκόσιν. Ἐκεῖνοι μὲν γὰρ καὶ ζῶντες τεθνήκασιν, οὗτοι δὲ καὶ ἀποθανόντες ζῶσιν. ἐκεῖνοι καὶ ἐνταῦθα ὄντες ἐλεεινοὶ πᾶσίν εἰσιν, ἐπειδὴ θεῷ προσκρούουσιν. οὗτοι καὶ ἐκεῖ μεταστάντες μακάριοι, ὅτι πρὸς τὸν Χριστὸν ἀπῆλθον. Οἱ ἁμαρτωλοί, ὅπου ἂν ὦσι, πόρρω τοῦ βασιλέως εἰσί. Διὰ τοῦτο δακρύων ἄξιοι. Οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι, ἄν τε ἐνταῦθα, ἄν τε ἐκεῖ, μετὰ τοῦ βασιλέως εἰσὶ, κἀκεῖ μᾶλλον καὶ ἐγγύτερον, οὐ διὰ εἴδους, οὐ διὰ πίστεως, ἀλλὰ, Πρόσωπον, φησὶ, πρὸς πρόσωπον. Μὴ τοίνυν ἁπλῶς κλαίωμεν τοὺς ἀποθανόντας, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἐν ἁμαρτίαις. οὗτοι θρήνων ἄξιοι, οὗτος κοπετῶν καὶ δακρύων. Ποία γὰρ ἐλπὶς, εἰπέ μοι, μετὰ ἁμαρτημάτων ἀπελθεῖν, ἔνθα οὐκ ἔστιν ἁμαρτήματα ἀποδύσασθαι; Ἕως μὲν γὰρ ἦσαν ἐνταῦθα, ἴσως ἦν προσδοκία πολλὴ, ὅτι μεταβαλοῦνται, ὅτι βελτίους ἔσονται. ἂν δὲ ἀπέλθωσιν εἰς τὸν ᾅδην, ἔνθα οὐκ ἔστιν ἀπὸ μετανοίας κερδᾶναί τι (Ἐν γὰρ τῷ ᾅδῃ, φησὶ, τίς ἐξομολογήσεταί σοι;), πῶς οὐ θρήνων ἄξιοι; κλαίωμεν τοὺς οὕτως ἀπερχομένους, οὐ κωλύω, κλαίωμεν, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἀσχημόνως . . . . κλαύσον τοὺς ἀπίστους, κλαύσον τοὺς οὐδὲν ἐκείνων ἀπέχοντας, τοὺς χωρὶς φωτίσματος ἀπερχομένους, τοὺς χωρὶς σφραγῖδος. οὗτοι ὄντως θρήνων ἄξιοι, οὗτοι ὀδυρμῶν. Ἔξω τῶν βασιλείων εἰσὶ μετὰ τῶν καταδίκων, μετὰ τῶν κατεγνωσμένων. Ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν . . . . Κλαίωμεν οὖν τούτους, βοηθῶμεν αὐτοῖς κατὰ δύναμιν, ἐπινοήσωμεν αὐτοῖς τινα βοήθειαν, μικρὰν μὲν, βοηθεῖν δὲ ὅμως δυναμένην. Πῶς καὶ τίνι τρόπῳ; Αὐτοί τε εὐχόμενοι, καὶ ἑτέρους παρακαλοῦντες εὐχὰς ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ποιεῖσθαι, πένησιν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν διδόντες συνεχῶς. Ἔχει τινὰ τὸ πρᾶγμα παραμυθίαν. ἄκουε γὰρ τοῦ θεοῦ λέγοντος. Ὑπερασπιῶ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης δι' ἐμὲ, καὶ διὰ Δαυὶδ τὸν δοῦλόν μου. Εἰ μνήμη μόνον δικαίου τοσοῦτον ἴσχυσεν, ὅταν καὶ ἔργα γένηται ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ, πῶς οὐκ ἰσχύσει; θὺκ εἰκῇ ταῦτα ἐνομοθετήθη ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων, τὸ ἐπὶ τῶν φρικτῶν μυστηρίων μνήμην γίνεσθαι τῶν ἀπελθόντων. Ὅσασιν αὐτοῖς πολὺ κέρδος γινόμενον, πολλὴν τὴν ὠφέλειαν. Ὅταν γὰρ ἑστήκῃ λαὸς ὁλόκληρος

χεῖρας ἀνατείνοντες, πλήρωμα ἱερατικόν, καὶ προκέηται ἡ φρικτὴ θυσία, πῶς οὐ δυσωπήσομεν ὑπὲρ τούτων τὸν θεὸν παρακαλοῦντες; Ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν περὶ τῶν ἐν πίστει παρελθόντων. οἱ δὲ κατηχούμενοι οὐδὲ ταύτης καταξιοῦνται τῆς παραμυθίας, ἀλλὰ ἀπεστέρηνται πάσης τῆς τοιαύτης βοηθείας, πλὴν μιᾶς τινος. Ποίας δὴ ταύτης; Ἔνεστι πένησιν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν διδόναι. ποιεῖ τινα αὐτοῖς παραψυχὴν τὸ πρᾶγμα. καὶ γὰρ παρ' ἀλλήλων ἡμᾶς ὠφελεῖσθαι βούλεται ὁ θεός. Διὰ τί γὰρ ὑπὲρ εἰρήνης καὶ εὐσταθείας τοῦ κόσμου ἐκέλευσεν εὔχεσθαι; διὰ τί ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων; καίτοι γε ἐνταῦθα ἐν πᾶσίν εἰσι καὶ λῃσταὶ καὶ τυμβωρύχοι καὶ κλέπται, καὶ μυρίων κακῶν γέμοντες. ἀλλ' ὅμως ὑπὲρ πάντων εὐχόμεθα. ἴσως γὰρ ἔσται τις αὐτῶν ἐπιστροφή. Ὥσπερ οὖν ὑπὲρ τῶν ζώντων εὐχόμεθα τῶν οὐδὲν διαλλαττόντων τῶν νεκρῶν, οὕτως ἔνεστι καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐκείνων εὔχεσθαι.

(In Epist. ad Philipp. Hom. III 3, 4; PG. LXII, 203)

116 ὁ μὲν γὰρ τὸ πᾶν ἐπὶ τὸν θεὸν ῥίψας, καὶ μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα ἁμαρτάνων ἆρα εἰκὸς ἄνθρωπον ὄντα, μετανοῶν τεύξεται φιλανθρωπίας. Ὁ δὲ ὥσπερ σοφιζόμενος τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν, ἀπελθὼν ἄμοιρος τῆς χάριτος, ἀπαραίτητον ἕξει τὴν τιμωρίαν.

(In Acta Apost. Hom. i 6; PG LX 23)

117 Εὐξώμεθα δὴ κοινῇ πάντες ... αὐτὸν τὸν μακάριον Μελέτιον κοινωνὸν τῆς εὐχῆς ταύτης λαβόντες (καὶ γὰρ πλείων αὐτῷ παῤῥησία νῦν, καὶ θερμότερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς. ἡμᾶς τὸ φίλτρον), αὐξηθῆναι ταύτην ἡμῖν τὴν ἀγάπην.

(De S. Meletio, 3; PG., L, 520)

118 καὶ μὴ μόνον ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἑορτῆς ταύτης, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ἑτέραις ἡμέραις προσεδρεύωμεν αὐταῖς, παρακαλῶμεν αὐτάς, ἀξιῶμεν γενέσθαι προστάτιδας ἡμῶν. πολλὴν γὰρ ἔχουσι παῤῥησίαν οὐχὶ ζῶσαι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τελευτήσασαι. καὶ πολλῷ μᾶλλον τελευτήσασαι. Νῦν γὰρ τὰ στίγματα φέρουσι τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὰ δὲ στίγματα ἐπιδεικνύμεναι ταῦτα, πάντα δύνανται πεῖσαι τὸν βασιλέα. Ἐπεὶ οὖν τοσαύτη ἡ δύναμις αὐταῖς καὶ φιλία πρὸς τὸν θεὸν, τῇ συνεχεῖ προσεδρίᾳ καὶ τῇ διηνεκεῖ πρὸς αὐτὰς ἀφίξει καταστήσαντες ἑαυτοὺς οἰκείους αὐτῶν, ἐπιστασώμεθα δι' αὐτῶν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν ἧς γένοιτο πάντας ἡμᾶς ἐπιτυχεῖν χάριτι.....

(De SS. Bernice et Prosdose, 7; PG., L, 640)

119 οἱ τάφοι τῶν δούλων τοῦ σταυρωθέντος λαμπρότεροι τῶν βασιλικῶν εἰσιν αὐλῶν, οὐ τῷ μεγέθει καὶ τῷ κάλλει τῶν οἰκοδομημάτων μόνον, καὶ τούτῳ μὲν γὰρ κρατοῦσιν, ἀλλ', ὃ πολλῷ πλέον ἐστί, τῇ σπουδῇ τῶν συνιόντων. καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ τὴν ἀλουργίδα περικείμενος ἀπέρχεται τὰ σήματα ἐκεῖνα περιπτυξόμενος καὶ τὸν τῦφον ἀποθέμενος ἕστηκε δεόμενος, τῶν ἁγίων, ὥστε αὐτοῦ προστῆναι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ καὶ τοῦ σωηνοποιοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁλιέως προστατῶν καὶ τετελευτηκότων δεῖται ὁ τὸ διάδημα ἔχων.

(In Ep.ii ad Cor. Hom. XXVI 5; PG LXI 582)

120 ὅπερ εἰδότες, ἀγαπητοί, καταφευγῶμεν μὲν ἐπὶ τὰς τῶν ἁγίων πρεσβείας καὶ παρακαλῶμεν ὥστε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν δεηθῆναι, ἀλλὰ μὴ ταῖς ἐκείνων ἱκεσίαις μόνον θαῤῥῶμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὰ καθ' ἑαυτοὺς δέοντως οἰκονομῶμεν, καὶ τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον μεταβολῆς ἐχώμεθα, ἵνα χώραν δῶμεν τῇ πρεσβείᾳ τῇ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν γινομένῃ.

(In Genes. Hom. XLIV 2; PG., LIV, 408)

121 οὐ χρεία σοι μεσιτῶν ἐπὶ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐδὲ πολλῆς τῆς περιδρομῆς καὶ τοῦ κολακεῦσαι ἑτέρους, ἀλλὰ κἂν ἔρημος ᾖς κἂν ἀπροστάτευτος, αὐτὸς διὰ σαυτοῦ παρακαλέσας τὸν θεὸν ἐπιτεύξῃ πάντως. οὐχ οὕτω δι' ἑτέρων ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν παρακαλούμενος ἐπινεύειν εἴωθεν, ὡς δι' ἡμῶν αὐτῶν τῶν δεομένων, κἂν μυρίων ὦμεν γέμοντες κακῶν.

(Sermo. Philip. i.18., PG., LI, 319)

122 Timothy ~~Aelurus~~ I (381-385) who was the ~~Monophysite~~ Patriarch of Alexandria, in an interesting passage in the ~~Canonical Answers (33)~~ Apokrisis Kanon. kai quest. 14 provides regulations for the commemorations of the departed in the Eucharist, in the Egyptian Church. The regulations emerged after the case of two nuns who had committed suicide. Timothy says in this matter that the 'sacrifice' should be offered only where the suicide could be definitely 'traced to insanity'. This incident is interesting for it is an early reference to the Church's attitude to suicide and it reflects a belief that suicide was a mortal sin which put the deceased outside the Church, and consequently outside salvation (?).

123 R.E. Hutton, The Soul in the Unseen World, London 1901. p.241.

124 Quaestiones et dubia X.

125 G. Lacey May, 'Dual Attitude to Death', CQR 55, (1954) p.265.

126 The refusal of orthodoxy to dogmatise in this area is the product of many factors not the least of which is reaction to Roman Catholicism! But more than this it is an expression of

the strong apophatic tradition in Eastern theology. Negative theology in orthodoxy is an expression of that fundamental attitude which transforms the whole of theology into a contemplation of the mysteries of revelation. It is not a branch of theology but rather the means to see above all a negative meaning in the dogmas of the Church: it forbids an individual to follow natural ways of thought and to form concepts which would usurp the place of spiritual realities. As Vladimir Lossky writes: 'Theology will never be abstract, working through concepts, but contemplative; raising the mind to those realities which pass all understanding. This is why the dogmas of the Church often present themselves to the human reason as antinomies, the more difficult to resolve the more sublime the mystery which they express. It is not a question of suppressing the antinomy by adapting dogma to our understanding, but of a change of heart and mind enabling us to attain to the contemplation of the reality which reveals itself to us as it raises us to God, and unites us, according to our several capacities, to Him.'
(Op.cit., p.430). See also Lossky, In the Image and Likeness of God, ET., London 1975, p.150f.

127 Quoted by A.J. Maclean, 'Prayer for the Departed', ERE, X p.213.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE THOUGHT OF THE WEST FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE 3RD CENTURY TO THE TIME OF GREGORY THE GREAT

a) THIRD CENTURY THOUGHT WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO CYPRIAN

Probably the greatest Christian figure in the West during the third century was St. Cyprian (d.258). Among the many problems which he had to face as Bishop of Carthage was that of large numbers of Christians lapsing from their faith as a result of the Decian Persecution, which broke out only a matter of months after his consecration, in the Autumn of 249. And it was this more than anything else which was ultimately to determine his attitude to questions relating to the life after death.[1]

On the one hand, Cyprian was confronted with large numbers of Christians lapsing from their faith and many more managing to secure libelli pacis. On the other hand, no doubt in part reaction to the cowardice of such Christians, in some Church circles he had to contend with the exaggerated respect which was coming to be paid to the courage of others. Martyrdom had always been prized in the Church and especially so in Africa, but now it was being suggested that those who had remained steadfast in the faith and consequently suffered, had acquired sufficient merit to atone for those who had lapsed.[2] Consequently, with the easing of the persecution, the weaker brethren began to slowly return to Church services and with them they brought, not the libelli testifying to their fall, signed by the presiding Roman officer at the sacrifice, but libelli bearing the signature of some Christian hero who had gone to prison, to torture or to death, for his faith. The confessor or martyr, it was alleged, having won the victory for himself could transfer the merit of it to his weaker brethren and so grant them readmission to the full fellowship of the Church.

Within a very short time it must have been apparent that the confessors were sometimes reconciling the lapsed on ridiculously easy terms. Cyprian, although an admirer of the confessors, was strongly opposed to their practice, and insisted that the lapsed should be reconciled only after suitable penance and delay.

Unfortunately for Cyprian, this policy, whilst entirely laudable to us for its sobriety, was not without its critics. Chief among them was the presbyter Novatus, who made a great point of the apparent coldness shown by the Bishop to the confessors. The dispute worsened and soon an open breach occurred. Both parties then sought support at Rome where a curiously parallel state of affairs had arisen. For the personal animosity of Novatus against Cyprian had its counterpart in the feud between Novatian and his bishop, Cornelius. Novatian, who was entirely orthodox in his theology, had originally adopted a similar attitude on the subject of the lapsed to that of Cyprian. However, in view of the fact that this moderate line was also being taken by his opponent Cornelius, Novatian, perhaps in order to assert himself, became the champion of an extreme rigorism. Nevertheless, it was with him that Novatus, the champion of laxity at Carthage, formed an alliance. In opposition to this combination Cornelius and Cyprian recognised and supported each other. The whole effort of the two bishops was directed towards regularising the attitude of the Church towards the lapsed through the educational use of penance.

The question was at first kept open until it could be dealt with by a council, and in 251 and 252, two Councils were held at Carthage at which the opinion of Cyprian that the lapsed should be reconciled only after suitable penance and delay was reinforced. It was decided to ignore the certificates obtained from confessors and to consider each case on its merits. Those who had actually sacrificed were not to be readmitted except *in extremis*. In judging other cases, extenuating circumstances were to be taken into consideration. There was to be a public confession, a period of penance commensurate with the fault, and then readmission by imposition of hands. Clergy might be restored on these terms to communion, but never again to the exercise of their functions.

As one traces the course of this controversy through the writings of St. Cyprian, one can see how he is careful to

steer a via media through the differing factions, opposing at one and the same time, laxity with strict justice, and turgid rigorism with true Christian charity. Cyprian was opposed to any practice or attitude which represented grace either as the Church's inexhaustible treasury from which she showers blessings with generous hands, or alternatively as her prized possession in which only the 'holy' were permitted to participate. In either case grace was cheapened. The immediate consequence of the controversy, however, was the development of a balanced and fair penitential system in the Church, one which acknowledged the necessity for high Christian standards but which did not refuse the penitent sinner forgiveness; one which allowed for the justification of the sinner without the justification of sin because it was a system which claimed recognition from the Divine justice. As Cyprian wrote in his treatise De Lapsis:

> God, in proportion as with the affection of a Father he is always indulgent and good, in the same proportion is to be dreaded with the majesty of a judge. Even as we have sinned greatly, so let us greatly lament. To a deep wound let there not be wanting a long and careful treatment; let not the repentance be less than the sin.[3]

It was this development of the penitential system and its specifically juridical connotations which was to prove of immeasurable significance in subsequent thought in that it provided later Western theologians with an acceptable theological framework in which they could formulate developing notions of purgatorial discipline in the after-life into a logically-coherent system. As of yet, of course, such a degree of systematisation is not apparent in the thought of Cyprian. After all, Cyprian like so many of his contemporaries, was not concerned to expound upon the life after death, but rather to face the immediate theological issues of his day and the various practical pastoral problems which pressed upon him. Not that one should imagine from this that Cyprian had no interest in the subject; for in addition to material relevant to the questions

pertaining to the liturgical commemoration of the dead, there is every indication that Cyprian did consider some of the issues which arise from the inter-action of a penitential system and traditional expectations of the state of the faithful departed.

For example, in his Epistle to Antonianus about Cornelius and Novatian (252)[4], in which Cyprian is concerned to disuade Antonianus from following Novatian and the rigorist party, he argues as follows:

> And do not think, dearest brother, that either the courage of the brethren will be lessened, or that martyrdoms will fail for this cause, that repentance is relaxed to the lapsed, and that the hope of peace is offered to the penitent. The strength of the truly believing remains unshaken, and with those who fear and love God with their whole heart, their integrity continues steady and strong .... For it is one thing to stand for pardon, another thing to attain to glory: it is one thing, when cast into prison, not to go out thence until one has paid the uttermost farthing; another thing at once to receive the wages of faith and courage. It is one thing, tortured by long suffering for sins, to be cleansed and long purged by fire; another to have purged all sins by suffering. It is one thing, in fine, to be in suspense till the sentence of God at the day of judgment; another to be at once crowned by the Lord.[5]

In this passage, as part of his general invective against rigorism, Cyprian is plainly contending that any criticisms of weakness which may be levelled against him are entirely unfounded. In arguing his case that leniency towards the lapsed in no way constitutes laxity, he is concerned to show that a moderate policy, once adopted, far from cheapening grace actually establishes its true worth, for it neither denies the mercy of God towards sinners nor undermines the integrity of Christians who stood firm in the faith during the persecution. He is able to argue this point because in his view although the lapsed are offered 'the hope of peace' they are not actually granted immediate reconciliation, but rather are subject to a period of penitential discipline

according to the severity of their sin. Indeed, in some cases, Cyprian definitely seems to consider it possible for this period of discipline to be extended into the after-life, even 'till the sentence of God at the day of judgment.' The state of some of the departed may thus be said to be truly a state of waiting, of 'suspense' until reconciliation is effected. It is moreover a state of suffering for it is one in which 'all sins are purged'. To quote R.E. Hutton again, whose words are particularly applicable to St. Cyprian at this point:

> The absence of guilt is by no means the same thing as the possession of sanctity. The one is negative, the other a positive state.[6]

For Cyprian, then, the way to perfection leads through suffering. On the one hand, the lapsed must needs do penance for their sins and that penance involves the discipline of suffering. In their cowardice they avoided the sufferings of persecution which may befall every sincere Christian. So now, if they are to be reconciled with God, they must be purged of their sin in penitential suffering which may for some continue after death. On the other hand, martyrs and confessors, by contrast, are for Cyprian exempt from all purgatorial suffering. At death they are 'at once crowned by the Lord'. In this conviction, Cyprian was obviously true to the internal logic of his own system of thought; but he was also in keeping with the whole tradition of African theology to this point, which as we have seen in connection with the thought of Tertullian,[7] always exalted martyrdom, exempting martyrs from the necessity of any delay in the attainment of glory after death, granting them immediate union with Christ. In his Exhortation to Martyrdom Cyprian describes the rewards which will be attained by a patient endurance of conflicts and sufferings, thus:

> What a dignity it is and what a safeguard, to go gladly from hence, to depart gloriously in the midst of tribulations and afflictions, to close in a moment the eyes, with which men and the world were looked upon, and to open them at once for the vision of God and Christ! ... his reward is given, without

> loss of time, by the judgment of God.[8]

In view of the high place which Cyprian affords the martyrs it is hardly surprising to find him directing his clergy in another of his epistles, to take note of the days of the deaths of those who suffer in the persecution so that they may be rightly commemorated among the martyrs. He then goes on to mention that, through the care of one of the Carthaginian Christians, he knows the days on which 'our blessed brethren in prison pass to immortality by the departure of a glorious death' so that he is able to 'celebrate the oblations and the sacrifice in commemoration of them.'[9] Similarly, in another of his epistles addressed to the clergy and laity of his diocese, he speaks as follows:

> We always offer the sacrifices for them, as you remember, wherein we celebrate the sufferings and days of the martyrs at the yearly commemorations of their anniversaries.[10]

Apart from providing further indisputable evidence to that already supplied by Tertullian for the early liturgical commemoration of the faithful departed in the eucharist of the African Church, the above statements also indicate that Cyprian (and one presumes him to be representative of contemporary thought here) saw no contradiction in ascribing to the martyrs the glory and privilege of immediate union with Christ by virtue of their sufferings, whilst at one and the same time, offering the eucharistic sacrifice and praying for their repose and well-being. For, apart from the lapsed and sinners who are, of course, excluded from the commemorative prayer of the Church, Cyprian displays no move towards the differentiation of the state of the departed into those who by virtue of their sanctity are no longer to be prayed for, and those for whom prayer is still fitting. All are bound together in the love of Christ, a love which destroys all barriers and which is expressed in a reciprocity of prayer.[11] Cyprian's thought at this point receives a rather personal exposition in a letter to his friend and colleague, Bishop Cornelius, in which he talks about their own deaths, and the pain of separation that will ensue. After some discussion of this point, Cyprian experiences

consolation at the thought of ~~them~~ their continuing to pray for each other, even though separated by death.

> Let us mutually be mindful of each other, with one heart and one mind. On both sides let us always pray for each other, let us relieve our afflictions and distresses by a reciprocity of love (mutua caritate), and whichever of us goes hence before the other by the speed of the Divine favour, let our affection continue before the Lord, let not prayer for our brothers and sisters cease before the mercy of the Father.[12]

Once again one notes how prayer for the departed in the early Church was something which flowed out of and was characterised by a 'reciprocity of love'. To what extent the supremely personal remarks of Cyprian were typical of contemporary private devotion (if such a phrase has meaning in this period)[13] is, of course, uncertain. Many scholars would question that it was. However, one cannot but help think that such thoughts as Cyprian here expresses are a genuine expression of the fact that prayer for the departed amongst Christians was as much the prerogative of family and friends as of the Church as a whole in its liturgy and worship.

With regard to liturgical commemoration, however, one certainly gains the impression from Cyprian's writings, that to be remembered at the altar was a highly valued privilege, and the discipline which withheld this privilege from offenders had become a formidable weapon in the hands of the bishop and presbyters of the Church. For example, in one of his epistles, Cyprian mentions the rule made by his predecessors in the episcopate that, if a Christian should appoint an ecclesiastic to any office of administration or guardianship, contrary to the law of the Church that the clergy should not be hindered in their proper work and life by such matters,

> No offering should be made for him, nor any sacrifice be celebrated for his repose. For he does not deserve to be named at the altar of God in the prayer of the priests, who has wished to call away the priests and ministers from the altar.[14]

And in accordance with this rule, he directs as follows:

> And, therefore, since Victor, contrary to the rule lately made in Council by the priests, has dared to appoint Geminius Faustinus, a presbyter, his executor, it is not allowed that any offering be made by you for his repose, nor any prayer be made in the Church in his name, that so the decree of the priests, religiously and needfully made, may be kept by us; and, at the same time, an example be given to the rest of the brethren, that no one should call away to secular anxieties the priests and ministers of God who are occupied with the service of his altar and Church.[15]

The picture of Church life in Carthage which emerges from such passages as those is certainly impressive and well-defined. Through the effects of persecution, prayer for the departed had obviously become both an exemplification of and a witness to the unity and faith of the Church. Theologically, however, it had changed little. Neither in its attributes nor in the orientation of its thought is there to be found any development from earlier practice. Liturgically, the eucharistic associations of the practice seem to have deepened since the time of Tertullian, particularly in relation to the notion of the eucharistic sacrifice. It takes little imagination to picture the clergy and people gathering together for the Eucharist around the primitive altar, Sunday by Sunday, and at the appropriate place in the liturgy, hearing the names of the faithful departed read out by the deacon, and intercession offered for them by the bishop, confident in the knowledge that the deceased rest in the unity of the Church and in the peace of Christ. Similarly, when the anniversaria commemoratio of a martyr came round, one can catch the note of triumphant joy with which the Sacrifice must have been offered for their repose in thanksgiving for the witness of their life and death.

It would be of great interest to know whether other churches had by this time followed in the steps of Carthage. But as was noted in the previous chapter, there is little information on the subject to be found outside the Province of

Africa apart from the occasional liturgical fragments from the Syrian Church which have already been examined. In the West, to the witness of Tertullian and Cyprian can only be added a single reference from Arnobius, but it is one not without significance.

Arnobius (d.c.330) was a Christian apologist who flourished in the time of the Emperor Diocletian (284-305). In his Adversus Gentes (c.303-310), a treatise full of curious learning in which he defends the consonance of the Christian faith with the best pagan philosophy, he protests against the destruction of the churches on the ground that prayer is offered in them both for the living and for the dead:

> Why must our meetings be cruelly broken up? in which prayer is made to the Supreme God, peace and pardon are asked for all in authority, for soldiers, kings, friends, enemies, for those still in life, and those freed from the bondage of the flesh.[16]

Although Arnobius was of African extraction (Jerome says he was originally a rhetorician at Sicca), this reference to the intercession for the living and the dead in the liturgy is of great importance, for it compels the acceptance of the proposition that by the time of the last persecution, the commemoration of the departed in the Eucharist had become so universal in the churches of the Empire that an appeal could be made to it by a Christian writer before the heathen world. As such it represents important evidence particularly when placed alongside the developing liturgy of the East and its theology of 'commemoration'. Unfortunately, it provides no information about Arnobius' understanding of the actual state of the departed, or that of his contemporaries. For such information, attention must be directed to Arnobius' pupil, Lactantius.

b) FOURTH CENTURY THOUGHT

The Roman world of the fourth century was a world that was gradually being transformed from a pagan into a Christian one. The Church was the one living creative force in the spiritual life of the age, and so, although Christianity was still for the most part the religion of a minority, its influence was spreading far and wide. Even the Imperial Court was not exempt from infiltration. Lactantius (c.240 - c.320), a pupil of Arnobius, had originally been appointed by the Emperor Diocletian to be a teacher of rhetoric at Nicomedia; but on Lactantius' conversion to Christianity in around the year 300, he was deprived of his post. With the rise of Constantine to power, however, and the recognition of Christianity, Lactantius found himself tutor to Constantine's son, Crispus, and once again in favour.

One of the most important of the surviving works of Lactantius is the Divinae Institutiones, a treatise written between 304 and 311 which sought to commend the truth of Christianity to men of letters and thereby for the first time to set out in Latin a systematic account of the Christian attitude to life. In the seventh book of the treatise,[17] one of the subjects that is dealt with is the question of life after death and the judgment of God, in relation to the Greek, and particularly the Stoic view of death and the immortality of the soul. Throughout his argument one can see Lactantius weaving a delicate line between contemporary thought and Christian theology, at once incorporating the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and, at the same time, reacting against many of its concomitants, such as propositions concerning the immunity of the soul from suffering. Lactantius is concerned to place everything within the Christian eschatological perspective, the framework ~~of~~ of judgment, of salvation and eternal punishment; and this as a matter of logic, necessitated the adoption of the view that souls can suffer. With regard to the judgment, Lactantius writes as follows:

> Not all men, however, shall be judged by God, but those only who have been exercised in the religion of God. For they who have not known God, since sentence cannot be passed upon them for their acquittal, are already judged and condemned, since the Holy Scriptures testify that the wicked shall not arise to judgment. Therefore, they who have known God shall be judged, and their deeds, that is, their evil works, shall be compared and weighed against their good ones: so that if those which are good and just are more and weighty, they may be given to a life of blessedness; but if the evil exceed, they may be condemned to punishment.[18]

From this it would appear that Lactantius envisaged three states of men. On one level, there was the simple division into those who were ~~righteous and those who were impious.~~ 'exercised in the religion of God' and those who were not. With regard to the latter Lactantius considers their fate to be sealed; concerning the former, however, he draws a further distinction between those who through their good deeds are found worthy of eternal bliss and those who, through a preponderance of evil deeds and sin, require some temporary (?) punishment. Here the differing attitudes of East and West are immediately apparent. The East with its emphasis upon the love of God and the perfection into which God draws men, and with the tradition which it received from Origen of the reformatory character of punishment - a tradition which it never wholly abandoned - tends not to conceive of the suffering which some of the faithful may have to endure after death outside this positive perspective of growth and sanctification. The West, by contrast, and here Lactantius is a perfect example, with its general concern with notions of merit and legal exactitude, both of which are considered necessary corollaries to the justice of God, is tending more and more to conceive of suffering in juridical categories, as punishment for sin. This difference in emphasis can be seen particularly clearly in another passage of Lactantius:

> When He shall have judged the righteous, He will also try them with fire. Then they whose sins shall exceed either in weight or in number, shall be scorched by the fire and burnt; but they whom full justice and maturity of virtue has imbued

> will not perceive that fire; for they have something of God in themselves which repels and rejects the violence of the flame. So great is the force of innocence, that the flame shrinks from it without doing harm; which has received from God this power, that it burns the wicked, and is under the command of the righteous. Nor, however, let any one imagine that souls are immediately judged after death. For all are detained in one and a common place of confinement, until the arrival of the time in which the great Judge shall make an investigation of their deserts. Then they whose piety shall have been approved of will receive the reward of immortality; but they whose sins and crimes shall have been brought to light will not rise again, but will be hidden in the same darkness with the wicked, being destined to certain punishment. [19]

The juridical atmosphere which emerges from this passage calls for little further comment. One notes the emphasis which Lactantius places upon the meeting out of 'full justice' and of the distribution of 'rewards' and 'punishments' according to an individual's deserts. This legalistic vocabulary will be seen to characterise much of subsequent Latin thought about the state of the departed.

With regard to Lactantius' employment of the image of fire, which first received prominence in the thought of Clement of Alexandria and which of course is to dominate Western Medieval thought about Purgatory, it must be emphasised that an intermediate state of continuous purgation is not envisaged here. The fire which Lactantius speaks of here is the fire of the Last Judgement and <u>not</u> of an intermediate state. That this is so is clear not simply from the general thrust of his thought but from his express declaration that 'souls are not judged immediately after death'. Indeed, Lactantius seems to envisage no preliminary differentiation in the state of the departed whatsoever! In this matter, Lactantius departed from accepted opinion which almost without exception conceived of a differentiation in the state of the departed, with the righteous enjoying a preliminary taste of the joy that was to be consummated at the Last Day, and the wicked suffering in anticipation of the impending judgment of God. No

such thought, however, is apparent in the writings of Lactantius. Lactantius seems to have envisaged all the departed passing into one common place of ward (custodia) after death, there to be detained until 'the arrival of the time', meaning the Final Judgment.[20] If Lactantius was not to be followed in this particular opinion, the general tenor of his thought was to find expression in the writings of Hilary, Ambrose and Jerome, who together formed the next generation of Latin theologians.

Hilary of Poitiers (c.315 - 367), although he has very little to say on the subject of the departed - being more concerned with the refutation of the Arian heresy than anything else - would seem to have been entirely 'traditional' in his thought about the state of the departed and in complete agreement with contemporary Western theology.

For Hilary, as for all Christian theologians, the Christian life has its beginnings in the free gift of Baptism, when the new life and the new faculties then bestowed, render possible the illumination of the soul.[21] But Hilary, as was perhaps natural at a time when Baptism was often deferred by professed Christians, and there were many converts from paganism, feels it necessary to warn his readers that their Baptism will not restore them to perfect innocence. In fact by a strange conjecture tentatively made, Hilary makes the suggestion in one place that Baptism is that with which John baptized Our Lord, and that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit awaits the Christian hereafter, in cleansing fires beyond the grave or in the purification of martyrdom.[22] Martyrdoms had, of course, ceased in Hilary's day throughout the Roman Empire; but it is interesting to observe that the old opinion, which had power in the third century, still survived. In view of this, all Christians, according to Hilary, have need for fear. Not that by this Hilary means to deprive Christians of the hope of their calling. Far from it! The Christian has a strong hope of salvation, for all the baptised while in this world are still in the land of the living, and can only forfeit their citizenship

by wilful and persistent unworthiness.[23] Even so, however, the Christian can still expect purification after death.

At death, Hilary envisages all souls descending to Hades; for such is the law of human necessity in his view, that while bodies are buried, souls descend (and he cites the parable of Dives and Lazarus as proof of this). The human soul, being created after the image of God, is imperishable. Thus, resurrection for Hilary is as inevitable as death.[24] Until that time, however, the souls of the faithful are reserved in the keeping of the Lord which Hilary terms the Bosom of Abraham. The wicked, by contrast, are kept separate from the righteous by an intervening chaos.[25] At the resurrection the body of the good will be glorified, like that of Christ - indeed the true life of man only begins when this transformation takes place. No such change, however, awaits the wicked, they remain as they are, or rather, are subjected to a ceaseless process of deterioration, whereby the soul is degraded to the level of the body whereas in the case of ~~others~~ righteous, ~~it~~ the body is raised, either instantly or by a course of purification, to the level of the soul.[26]

For the thoroughly good and the thoroughly bad then, the final state begins at the moment of death. There is no judgment for either class. Judgment only occurs for those whose character contains elements of both good and bad. In his homily on the first Psalm, Hilary writes as follows:-

> Judgment arises out of ambiguity, and where ambiguity ceases, there is no call for trial and judgment. Hence not even unbelievers need be judged, because there is no doubt about their being unbelievers; but after exempting believers and unbelievers alike from judgment, the Lord added a case for judgment and human agents upon whom it must be exercised. For some there are who stand midway between the godly and the ungodly, having affinities to both, but strictly belonging to neither class, because they have come to be what they are by a combination of the two.[27]

Whatever the doctrine implicit in this passage, in reality, it is apparent from reading Hilary, that perfect goodness was with him a mere theoretical possibility. Furthermore he is not certain of the condemnation of any except wilful unbelievers. Evil is mingled in varying proportions with good in the character of men at large, and God can detect it in the very best. Consequently, it follows for Hilary that all men must need to be purified after death if they are to escape condemnation on the Day of Judgment. Even the Mother of Our Lord is not exempt from the need of purification by pain![28] After the purification, Hilary places the general Resurrection, which to the good will bring the final change to perfect glory and to the bad only a return to their former place of misery.[29] Hilary's writings contain no hint that any who are allowed to present themselves on the Day of Judgment will then be rejected.

With St. Hilary of Poitiers then, one is presented with a view of the after-life which incorporates an understanding of the intermediate state in terms of an extended period of purgation, whereby the multitude of men will be individually judged after death, and after the education and purification of suffering to which, by God's mercy, they have been submitted, will be eventually accepted by Him and will enter into His glory. Similar views to these are to be found in the writings of St. Ambrose (339 - 397), a contemporary of Hilary, though they are expressed within a different structure and are treated more systematically.

A lawyer by training, a civil servant by profession, St. Ambrose was elected Bishop of Milan in 374, while still as yet unbaptised. Thereafter, he seems to have devoted himself almost entirely to his pastoral duties and to the study of the Scriptures. As a diligent student of the Greek writers, Ambrose draws considerable inspiration from Origen and Didymus the blind, as well as St. Basil the Great and St. Athanasius, with the result that just as Maximus the Confessor at a later date was to represent a 'bridge' between Eastern and Western thought, so too Ambrose, in a different way, represents a curious blend of Greek dynamism and Latin legalism. And nowhere is this conjunction of thought

more apparent than in his theology of the After-life and the state of the faithful departed.

Throughout the thought of Ambrose on this issue there runs a general concern to insist upon the fact that man's future state is determined at his death and that whatever the rewards or punishments which may be allotted to an individual thereafter, they will be apportioned in direct accordance with the deeds which he performed whilst alive.[30] After death there is no 'remedy of conversion;'[31] he who has not received remission of sins in this world, will not receive it in the other.[32] The importance which Ambrose lays upon this fact is probably an aspect of the general reaction which was occurring in the Church at this time, against declining Christian standards and tendencies to delay baptism till near death, a reaction which has already been noted in the writings of Hilary and many of the Eastern Fathers. With Ambrose, however, the fact that at death man's destiny is irrevocably settled is fundamental to his thought, for his entire theological system about the After-life is based on the presupposition that men can be differentiated into various states according to the merits which they have accrued in their earthly existence.

Concerning the Other World, Ambrose envisages two main divisions - the Upper World, which is the abode of the righteous; and an Under World, which is the above of the wicked, each of which he sub-divides into various states. In the Upper World, for example, Ambrose distinguishes three heavens[33] - but since the first of these is considered by him to be part of this world, attention, for the sake of brevity need only be directed to that which he terms 'Paradise' and that which he calls the 'Kingdom of Heaven'.

Paradise, according to Ambrose, is a sublime and heavenly locality, on a super-terrestrial plane, where Adam and Eve dwelt before the Fall,[34] and it is to this place - the way having been

opened by Christ - that those redeemed souls, who yet fall short of the highest sanctity, pass at death,[35] there to await the Last Judgment, when they will be 'crowned' with the full reward of their merits.[36] In paradise they enjoy an existence 'much purer and more blissful' than that which they had in the flesh,[37] being now free from the 'slavery of the world'.[38] Moreover they are with Christ, and being with Christ, are in no danger of falling as Adam fell. In this emphasis Ambrose is in complete accord with the thought of the New Testament, as he is in his understanding of the character of the intermediate state. For according to Ambrose, the two characteristics which mark the state of the faithful in Paradise are rest and joy. The rest which they enjoy is the 'rest of remission', the 'blessed rest' which Lazarus experienced in Abraham's bosom. The joy which they experience is that ensuing from the prospect of eternal life, and it is moreover something which is directly proportional to the merit of any given individual. Ambrose envisages the souls of the just distributed in several 'dwelling places' (promptuaria),[39] each of which has its own special kind and degree of joy. This idea which is probably adopted from IV Esdras is but one small indication of the subtle inter-penetration of New Testament perspectives with Western notions of merit in the thought of Ambrose, an inter-play which will become increasingly apparent as this analysis proceeds.

Concerning Ambrose's thought about the 'Kingdom of Heaven', it is apparent that in his opinion only the most eminent saints can have their dwelling-place there for they alone merit the reward of complete felicityand accordingly (in spite of certain texts influenced by IV Esdras, Chapter 7), he represents the saints in heaven as mingling with the angelic choirs.[40] Only the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs enjoy "the glory" of the Kingdom. And even then, Ambrose envisages the Kingdom of Heaven being composed of various 'dwelling-places', an 'ascending series of mansions' which correspond with the diverse merits of those who occupy them.[41] In a homily on Psalm 38, he writes as follows:

> The Lord Jesus gives to each a place or mansion corresponding with the merits of each. He indeed ascended above all heavens to the throne of God; but men ascend from the first heaven to the second, from the second to the third, and from the third by gradations to the seventh heaven and to the very dome and summit of the heavens, if they so deserve. [42]

Ambrose distinguishes the state of those who inhabit the Kingdom of Heaven by three principal characteristics. The first is rest - more perfect and untroubled even than the rest vouchsafed to souls in Paradise. The second characteristic is the enjoyment of the Highest Good, the summum bonum, that is, God Himself, beyond which there is nothing that one can desire.[43] The third characteristic which marks the state of the faithful departed in the Kingdom of Heaven is that of Eternal Life or Eternal Salvation. The redeemed possess 'the blessedness of eternal life', the life which emanates from Christ and which is communicated to souls in virtue of their close relationship with Him.[44] All in all, it is an existence which is more intense and consummate and abundant than the life of souls in Paradise. For example, in another of Ambrose's homilies, he writes as follows:

> If he lives who is in the bosom of the patriarch Abraham, how much more does he live who is taken by Christ unto Himself! How can he not live for ever, whom Eternal Life has taken to Himself, whom Christ has wholly assumed, who belongs wholly to the Word, whose life is hid in Christ Jesus?
> Nevertheless, even he who has his abode in Abraham's bosom, is taken unto Himself by Christ. [45]

With regard to the Under World, Ambrose describes two main divisions - Hades and Hell. Hades, in Ambrose's opinion, is a gloomy place beneath the earth where before the time of Christ, all souls, whether good or bad were destined to go at death. Christ Himself, as Man, was 'due to the under world'; [46] but could not be held there as a prisoner. He was both free Himself, and set free the souls of the righteous.[47] Since that time Hades has been the abode of those who are unworthy to be received into Paradise.[47] Here they await the Last Judgment, when their wickedness will be punished. Meanwhile, though they have not yet

undergone plenary condemnation they are 'not without punishment'.[49]

In the lowest depth of the Under World, Ambrose locates Hell. The abyss is reserved for three clases, in his opinion, who after the Last Judgment will be thrust down thither. They are the devil and his angels, whose punishment is at present deferred, but who in the end will be condemned 'not to death, but to eternal punishment;[50] unbelievers, who will rise on the last day, not to be judged in the proper sense, but merely to receive their sentence;[51] and thirdly, great sinners, in whom no good could be found, whose sins preponderate in the Divine balance and 'sink them into the deep'.[52]

About Ambrose's doctrine of the Other World, perhaps two general points are warranted by way of comment. First, and foremost, it is plain that much of the structural form of Ambrose's theology represents a re-working of the thought of Origen who also envisaged the existence of various states after death. However, whereas in Origen the progression from one state to another was a positive movement in which the sinner was drawn into the all-embracing love of God and so came to the attainment of perfection; with Ambrose, the attainment of a state and one's progression from it subsequently would seem to be the result of accumulated merit. In Origen one is working within a thought pattern composed of dynamic concepts of growth and education; with Ambrose the atmosphere is different because one is dealing in more static concepts of merit, of rward and punishment. The thought- form is similar, the internal theological emphasis different.

Secondly, and this follows on from what has just been said, with the emphasis which Ambrose places upon the need for merit and his concern to equate reward with virtuous living, so one finds in his writing a tendency towards the systematisation of thought about the intermediate state into neat, almost intact categories, one of the results of which is a strict differentiation of the faithful departed into various states. From an early date, Christian theology had credited the martyrs with special

honour, some theologians even attributing to them the unique privilege of immediate union with Christ. But, even where such thought is entertained, the fundamental unity of all the faithful departed in Christ is never surrendered. With Ambrose, however, and other Western theologians of his age, one is left with the impression that the unity of the faithful after death is rather fragmentary and at best a subsidiary issue. Furthermore, it is apparent in his conception of the Kingdom of Heaven, and of the 'glory' to which the eminent saints are entitled, that Ambrose has lost something of the urgent eschatological longing of the New Testament. Indeed, this is a charge which can in some sense be equally applied to the thought of Origen at this point. Yet, with Origen, it would be true to say that the eschatological movement of the New Testament has effectively been translated and focused in his doctrine of the apocatastasis in which God shall be all in all, and that this provides both the pivot and the goal for his theology of the After-life. With Ambrose, however, no such goal is immediately present to the mind. The beatific vision of which he speaks has an air of finality about it. It is the consummation of a perfect life. Certainly one wonders what joy can be added to that which the saints already possess, come the Resurrection.

There remains one further aspect of the thought of Ambrose still to be considered and that concerns his exposition of the conception of a Purgatorial Fire. It is the opinion of Ambrose that since Adam's expulsion from Paradise there has been at the entrance of Paradise a fire, through which all who seek to enter must pass, for it is a fire which burns away all sin. He writes as follows:

> There is not one baptism only. One is that which the Church administers here by water and the Holy Spirit... Another is the baptism of suffering, whereby each is cleansed by his own blood. There is also a baptism at the entrance of Paradise. This last baptism did not exist at the beginning; but after the sinner was driven out of Paradise, God set there a fiery sword. When sin began, then began this baptism whereby those desirous of returning to Paradise might be purified, and after their return might say, 'We went through fire and through water'. Here through water, there through fire; through water that sins may be washed away, through fire that they may be burnt away. [53]

Furthermore, it is the opinion of Ambrose that since all men, except Christ, are sinners, all men except Christ must undergo this ordeal before they can be finally admitted into Paradise. Ambrose stresses this point in many places. For example, in one place he states emphatically that -

> All must be tried by fire, whosoever desire to return to Paradise. For not without meaning is it written that, when Adam and Even were expelled from Paradise, God set in the exit of Paradise a fiery sword which turned every way. All must pass through the flames - even John the Evangelist ... of whose death some have doubted, but of whose passing through the fire we cannot doubt; even Peter, who received the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.... With that fiery sword, then, iniquity shall be burnt away. Hence only One could be without experience of that fire, Christ, who is the Righteousness of God, because He did no sin; for in Him the fire found nothing which it could burn away. [54]

Yet, if Ambrose insists that 'even though a man be as holy as Peter or John, he must be baptized in this fire,' [55] it is also apparent from his thought that the great saints, because they are almost of pure metal, even though they pass through the flame, little trying by fire is needed. Ordinary persons, however, in whom precious metal is mixed with alloy, must remain in the fire until all the alloy has been consumed. And for the evil, in whom no precious metal at all is found, the fire of Hell is substituted for this fire of Purgatory.

> And this fire whereby involuntary and casual sins are burnt away, this fire which the Lord Jesus has prepared for the cleansing of His servants, is different from that which He has assigned to the devil and his angels, of which He says, 'Enter into everlasting fire'. [56]

Concerning the timing of the fire of Purgation, there would seem to be some confusion in thought of Ambrose. In some places, for example, and certainly from the general tenor of his thought, one is left with the impression that the process of purgation begins immediately after death, for only so can the faithful be admitted to Paradise, there to await the Resurrection. Elsewhere, however, Ambrose explicitly states that the testing will take place

'after the consummation of the age, when the angels are sent to separate the good from the bad',[57] in other words at the Judgment. This tension in Ambrose's thought is unresolved.

Once again, on a general point it may be said that Ambrose's exposition of the conception of the Purgatorial Fire, like his overall thought about the state of the faithful departed, is one convoluted ~~constructed~~ with ~~upon~~ the notion of merit. He views suffering, not so much as an educative process as more a punishment for sin. In Origen suffering constituted a means to growth; in Ambrose it tends to be the negative outcome of a lack of merit.

In view of the orientation of Ambrose's thought about the After-life and the state of the departed, it is perhaps surprising to find that his views find very little reflection in his teaching about prayer for the departed about which he seems to have been entirely traditional. He would seem to maintain in common with other theologians of his period only the vague contention that the souls of the faithful departed may be assisted by prayers and the offering of the Eucharist. For example, in the funeral oration entitled On the death of Valentinian which he delivered at Milan in 392, Ambrose addresses the departed souls of Gratian and Valentinian in these words:

> Blessed are you both, if my prayers shall be of any avail! No day shall pass by you in silence, no prayer of mine pass over you unhonoured, no night shall fly past you without your receiving the gift of some earnest prayer; I will attend you with all my oblations.[58]

Having quoted this passage, however, it should immediately be said that these words may be of greater importance than one might credit from a superficial glance, their true significance only becoming apparent when seen in relation to their historical context. On the one hand, Ambrose's words can only be appreciated when one realises that the Emperor Valentinian II had died unbaptised. It is now generally agreed that by 392 Theodosius the Great had withdrawn from his Western colleague both Italy and Africa

from his jurisdiction, leaving Valentinian only the nominal rule of the European provinces in the West of the Empire under the tutelage of the German General Arbogast. When Valentinian, wishing to be baptised, appealed to Ambrose to join him in Gaul, Ambrose, not daring to incur the displeasure of Theodosius, declined to go and remained in Italy. However, after the subsequent death of Valentinian, who was given out as having committed suicide (itself a mortal sin), though assassination was commonly suspected, for the death was not unwelcome to Theodosius, the body of the dead Emperor was brought to Milan. The question then was what should Ambrose do with it. Ambrose referred the problem to Theodosius and throughout the summer the corpse remained unburied while the sisters of Valentinian awaited an answer. When permission was finally granted for burial that autumn, Ambrose found himself in the invidious position of having to give the funeral oration. Apart from the obvious political and pastoral tensions which required him to walk 'a rhetorical tight-rope', [59] Ambrose was faced with an important theological problem pertaining to the unbaptised condition of Valentinian. Throughout his writings, Ambrose upholds the common view that there is no salvation to be had outside the Church, or more specifically, outside water-baptism. The only exception which he makes to this rule is that of the baptism by blood - martyrdom. Is the baptism of desire adequate? From the general tone of his writings one is forced to the conclusion that Ambrose denied its sufficiency. In view of this, the oration he delivered at the funeral of the Emperor presents one of two possibilities: Either Ambrose made a unique exception for Valentinian, which is not improbable in view of the circumstances of the man's death; or alternatively, that Ambrose regards prayer for the unbaptized dead as being efficacious. Although the latter view must be said to go against established precedent in the Church, with the exception, of course, of the prayers of Thecla for Falconilla[60] and of Perpetua for Dinocrates,[61] which do offer some parallels here, it is an interpretation of the evidence which is a real possibility, especially in view of the urgency of Ambrose's language which would seem to be

more than rhetoric or pastoral sensitivity.

The second possible hidden significance of Ambrose's words lies in the mystery surrounding the identity of 'Gratian' whom he also addresses at this point in the funeral oration. There are two possible candidates, one being Valentinian's half-brother who was murdered in a rebellion; the other being a son of Theodosius by his second wife, Galla (Valentinian's sister), who died in infancy (or so one presumes). Of the two possibilities, the latter is more likely,[62] and if this is the case, then one is faced with a whole complex of questions resulting from the interaction of inherited traditions about praying for the faithful departed, with the developing conception of original sin and by now, common practice of infant baptism.[63] If Gratian was baptised, then to what specific purpose was Ambrose's fervent prayer offered? Is this a general commendation or does he envisage him having to undergo purgative suffering too? Alternatively, if the child died unbaptised (and perhaps this is one of the reasons why his name is linked with Valentinian at this point?) then are we being presented with yet another exception to the rule? - one which certainly parallels the prayer of Perpetua for Dinocrates. Is it precisely because Gratian died unbaptised that Ambrose, unwilling to condemn him to eternal damnation, feels bound to pray for his soul in order to mitigate any suffering he might now endure? At this point one is inevitably venturing into the realm of pure speculation and the evidence is far too fragile to admit of any conclusion. In both cases, the interpretation rests upon circumstantial evidence and upon the weight one is prepared to put upon Ambrose's language, and both counts are open to disputation.

In spite of this, however, the significance of the passage as a whole is indisputable; for even if its precise interpretation must be subject to frequent re-assessment, the light it sheds upon the offering of prayer for the departed in the Church, the importance that was obviously attached to it, and the fact that it was a practice sometimes open to adaptation in order to meet the

needs of pastoral necessity, all serve to illuminate one's general understanding of the life of the early Church. Of Ambrose himself, it may be said that he merely endorses existing teaching on the subject. For example, in a letter written in about 397, he advises a friend, bereaved of his sister, 'not so much to weep for her as to offer prayers on her behalf'.[64] And the object of such prayers and offerings is to 'commend' the departed soul to God,[65] in order that he or she may be assured of a 'perfect rest' in the 'Land of the living'[66] and the 'washing away of transgressions'.[67] In this passing reference we have the clearest indication of the general direction of Ambrose's theology of the life after death - but it is only a passing reference. The pattern and content of prayer for the departed would seem therefore to be largely unchanged at this time. It certainly cannot be said to constitute evidence for a re-orientation in the substance of the prayer towards the alleviation of any suffering in Purgatory. Such a development belongs properly to Medieval thought and not to that of the fourth century.

With regard to the scope of prayer for the departed it is apparent that with the possible exception of Valentinian and Gratian Ambrose considered it fitting only for the faithful departed. Having said this, however, it must also be mentioned that Ambrose considered that the martyrs and saints, being de suo merito securi, have no real need of the prayers of the Church, a view quite common in the West. Here one sees a reflection of the differentiation in status which Ambrose draws between those of the faithful departed who dwell in the Kingdom of Heaven and those who find their rest in Paradise. Moreover, the saints and martyrs by virtue of their acquired merit are fitting 'patrons' to whom requests should be addressed. For example, Ambrose writes as follows:-

> Martyrs are to be besought, whose patronage we seem to claim for ourselves by having their bodies as a kind of pledge. They who washed away whatever sins they had in their own blood are able to entreat for our sins; for they are God's martyrs, our leaders, the spectators of our life and actions. Let us not be ashamed to employ

> them as intercessors for our weakness, because they themselves have known the weakness of the body, even when they overcame. [68]

On the other hand, it is the considered opinion of Ambrose that unbelievers, being already judged and condemned, do not warrant the prayers of the Church. Indeed, prayers for them cannot avail anything! Whether the souls of great and unrepentant sinners can be benefited by such prayers is a question which Ambrose does not discuss; but his teaching concerning the destiny of the wicked who die in their sins suggests that his answer would be in the negative.

Similar thought about prayer for the departed is to be found in the writings of St. Jerome (347 - 420). Like his contemporaries, Jerome was in full accord with the practice of commending the faithful departed in prayer to God, and, furthermore, encouraged the invocation of the saints in prayer. For example, in a vigorous dispute with Vigilantius, who asserted that prayers and intercessions must cease after death, Jerome writes as follows:-

> If the Apostles and Martyrs, while still in the body, are able to pray for others when as yet they ought to be anxious for themselves, how much more may they do so after they have been crowned, and gained victories and triumphs! One man, Moses, obtains from God pardon for six hundred thousand men in arms; and Stephen, the imitator of his Lord, and the first martyr in Christ, begs forgiveness for his persecutors; and shall their power be less after they have begun to be with Christ? [69]

Jerome himself, in a very personal way, invoked Paula in these words:

> Help Paula, with your prayers, the extreme old age of your devotee. Your faith and your work join you to Christ; being in his presence, you will more easily obtain that for which you ask. [70]

Evidence such as this and that provided by Jerome's contemporaries is more than sufficient to show that by the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth, it was the ordinary Christian belief in both the East and the West, that it

was lawful and expedient to address to the saints supplications for the benefit of their prayers to God. As has already been noted, in the East this belief was upheld within a reciprocity of prayer which was the natural expression of the reality of the unity of the faithful, living and departed in Christ. In the West, however, a different emphasis is apparent. According to Western theologians, the saints by virtue of their merit possess the glory of the kingdom in full already, and consequently although prayers may be fittingly addressed to them, they for their part have no real need of the prayers of the living. It would be presumptuous, however, to conclude from this that the West had only an imperfect hold on the reality of the doctrine of the communion of saints. This was not the case. In Jerome, for example, the prospect of meeting and conversing with the saints in heaven played a great part in his ideas about the future life. In one of his epistles,[71] he dwells on the subject with eager eloquence, pointing out that in heaven he would meet the Blessed Virgin, St. Anne, and other blessed ones whom he had never known on earth. Thus, with Western thought, one is presented with a change in perspective, a change which is the logical reflection of a change in theological emphasis due to its increasing preoccupation with juridical categories.

With regard to Jerome's precise understanding of the state of the departed, there is some confusion. The confusion arises from the fact that at different times during his life Jerome spoke differently of the lot of the soul after death.[72] Sometimes he says that at death the righteous enter Heaven immediately, and the wicked souls suffer - yet not nearly so much as they will after the Judgment - while at other times he asserts that all are imprisoned in an <u>infernus locus</u>, either in refreshment or punishment according to an individual's merits. For example, speaking of the lot of the righteous soul he can say that 'for a short labour he enjoys eternal beatitude, he is received by choirs of angels, and is cradled in the bosom of Abraham.'[73]

The confusion of his thought is also apparent in his Commentary on Daniel, where he declares that Christ descended to Hades, there to plunder death and to release the righteous souls and lead them to Heaven.[74] But the consequences of the release of souls in relation to the state of the righteous after death are never clearly worked out in Jerome's thought so that he can still assert that the righteous at death go, not to Paradise or Heaven as one might suppose, but to Abraham's Bosom in Hades!

This impression of some confusion in the thought of Jerome is the product of two things. First, and quite simply, it is the result of inadequate material. Jerome, particularly when compared with Ambrose, has very little to say about the state of the departed and what he does say is more often than not, subsidiary to his main point. Secondly, and more importantly, Jerome's inconsistency is a reflection of his fluctuating opinion of Origen. During the later years of his career, Jerome was embroiled in the debate concerning the merits of Origenism,[75] and it is more than probable that just as his general theological outlook was reorientated in accordance with his current view of Origen, so too his thought about the nature of the life after death was subject to variation as he reacted to Origenistic theories. Concerning the possibility of forgiveness beyond the grave, however, Jerome has but one thing to say and in that he was quite clear and straightforward. Commenting on the words 'When a wicked man dies his expectation shall perish and the hope of unjust men perishes', Jerome says:

> I would have you observe, that although there is no hope of pardon for the ungodly after death, there are nevertheless some who may be absolved after death from the lighter sins in which they were entangled when they died.[76]

Although this reference stands alone in the writings of Jerome, there is no reason to suppose that his thought about the possibility of forgiveness in the next world and the need for purification, was anything different from this or that it departed on any main issue from that of his Latin contemporaries, Hilary and Ambrose. Certainly the same preoccupation with merit and the

importance of purity is apparent throughout Jerome's thought.

For this shackling of Latin theology to legalistic categories in the chain of 'works' and 'merit', a process which we have here traced from Cyprian, through Lactantius to scholars such as Ambrose and Jerome, and which will later be shown to have exercised an important formative rôle in the thought of St. Augustine, Tertullian has commonly been made to bear most of the blame.[77] But it is a question whether the Latin language itself was not in fact a more powerful influence than the Roman lawyer who used it. As John Burnaby is at pains to point out,[78] the Latin meritum is a participial form of the verb mereri, while in Greek there is no verb 'to deserve'. Thus, he is able to argue that whereas the Greeks thought of merit or worth adjectivally, as a quality of persons or things, the Latins ask what a man has done to make him worthy. For the Greeks, desert becomes a matter of estimation, for the Latins a matter of fact. Consequently, while ἀξία means 'value' or ' dignity' as often as 'desert', mereri properly denotes the act by which the agent earns either a stipulated payment or a legal punishment; though it is naturally extended to cover 'moral' desert also. The Greek language could only supply its lack of an active verb meaning 'to deserve' by the periphrasis 'to be worthy' (ἄξιος εἶναι), or by the passives ἀξιοῦσθαι, καταξιοῦσθαι , which denote not the subject's 'right', but the estimate in which he is held by another. Thus, St. Paul for example, prays that the Thessalonians may be 'counted worthy' of their calling of the Kingdom of God (II Thes. 1 : 5,11). For the ideas of payment, reward, requital, Greek has of course an ample vocabulary; and here, interestingly enough, one finds that the commonest words are associated not with the juridical but with the economic sphere. μισθός , the New Testament 'reward', means 'payment for services'; ἀντιαπόδοσις and its cognates, common in Aristotle and in Biblical Greek, signify primarily the rendering of due or payment. Thus, while the Latin 'merit' regards both the claim for payment and the liability to punishment from the point of view of the claimant or person liable, the Greek tendency is to

regard punishment and reward objectively as the discharge of payment.

This linguistic analysis, while undoubtedly too facile a solution, if taken in isolation, to explain what was in reality a very complex phenomenon, (it can be argued, for example, that the Western emphasis upon merit was as much due to anthropological reasons as philological ones[79]), it does nevertheless, throw light not only on the differences between Eastern and Western views of the after-life as they were emerging in the fourth century, but also on the whole underlying movement of their respective spiritualities. On the one hand, Greek thought found it difficult to surrender the inherited New Testament perspective.[80] 'It is a righteous thing with God to recompense (ἀνταποδοῦναι)' (II Thes.1:6). But the natural correlate of ἀνταπόδοσις was μισθός - 'Call the labourers and give them their hire' (ἀποδὸς τὸν μισθόν); and neither the warning in Christ's parable, that God's recompense is not based on the principle of 'equal wages for equal work', nor the presence of metaphor in 'the wages of sin', could easily be forgotten. The recompense is God's sovereign act rather than man's earning. Consequently, Eastern theologians were rarely tempted to conceive of grace and human freedom apart from each other,[81] or to adopt any view of the life after death which lent its sanction to an association of sin and suffering of the same character as the legal association of crime and punishment.

On the other hand, Latin theologians, linguistically bound by the internal syntax of their vocabulary, almost inevitably adopted a different stance. The Latin <u>mereri</u> placed man's act in the foreground. 'To merit', writes Hilary, 'is predicable of the person whose own act is origin of the acquisition of merit for himself.'[82] It should be said, however, that nothing that man does or can do by his own merely natural powers is meritorious in the sight of God. There is no merit without grace. Yet with the help of grace, if he will but co-operate with it, man can merit not only more grace but eternal life and blessedness. And this he must do if he is to be saved, for there is no salvation without merit.

Thus, at one level it is possible to assert that no man merits (for example) the 'actual grace' which first enables him to prepare himself for justification, nor is his co-operation with it meritorious in the strict sense of the term. But when man does what he can, it is 'congruous' or fitting that his efforts should be rewarded. Hence it is possible to speak of a 'merit of congruity' (meritum de congruo). In this qualified sense a man may be said to merit the sanctifying grace which is essential to his justification, although this grace is strictly speaking merited by no man, but has been merited for all men by Christ alone. Once he is justified, however, and thus in a state of grace, it becomes possible for a man to perform truly meritorious acts, whereby he quite strictly deserves and becomes entitled to the eternal reward. For example, Tertullian can assert that 'The good deed puts God in debt.'[83] Thus, at this level, one can speak in terms of the 'merit of worthiness' (meritum de condigno). What is more, it is possible for a man to go beyond what is strictly required of him, and to perform ' works of supererogation' whereby he acquires more merit than he needs for his own salvation. This, in the opinion of the West, is what the saints have done; and their superfluity of merit, joined with the superabundant Merits of Christ, goes to form a Treasury of Merit, on which the Church can draw for the benefit of those who are deficient in merit.

Thus, it may be said in summary of Western thought about the state of the departed as we have found it exemplified in the writings of Lactantius, Hilary, Ambrose and Jerome, that although it embodies substantial agreement with Eastern thought of this period, by virtue of its increasing systematisation and definition, it lacks something of the Eastern flexibility. Furthermore, it is apparent that in its concern with legalistic notions of merit[84] and its correspondence to reward and punishment in the after-life, the overall perspective of Western theology is tending to diverge from that of the East. And this movement, it should be noted, is to be seen as much in its distinctive spirituality and liturgy[85] as it began to emerge during this period, as in its theology as such.

It was moreover within this atmosphere that Augustine wrote and preached, and as an inheritor of a tradition of Western thought about the departed,[86] and as a precursor of the way Medieval thought would continue to develop, his thought is worthy of close consideration. It is, therefore, to him that attention will now be directed.

c) AUGUSTINE

As with so many other doctrines, it was Augustine who set the seal on Western teaching regarding the state of the faithful departed and questions relating to the practice of prayer for the dead. A familiar cliché describes Augustine as 'a man living on the frontiers of two worlds, the ancient world which was passing away and the medieval world which was coming into being'; and this designation is entirely accurate. For in the thought of St. Augustine is to be found both the crystallisation point for Western patristic teaching and, at the same time, the growing point for later medieval theology. It is hoped that the dual significance of Augustine's thought will become increasingly apparent as this analysis proceeds.

St. Augustine was born at Thagaste in the year 354. In 374, at the age of twenty, he became a Manichaean and remained such for some ten years. After teaching at Carthage he went to Rome and from there to Milan, as the Public Orator. The story of his conversion to Christianity is well known and needs little rehearsal here. The beginnings of his return to Catholicism would seem to have been due to the fact that in 385, some Neo-Platonist writings (almost certainly Latin translations of Plotinus), came into his hands and greatly impressed him,[87] so that from that time onward he accepted the main principles of the Neo-Platonic philosophy, and his whole intellectual outlook, his spirituality included, was conditioned by it. His conversion finally took place in 386 and he was baptized by Ambrose, who was bishop of Milan, the following year. Shortly after his baptism he returned to Africa, there to be ordained priest in 391, and ultimately bishop in 396, which he remained until his death in 430.

Our knowledge of the life of St. Augustine, it should be noted, is drawn from four main sources. In the first place, from the Confessions - his own account of his life from birth to his conversion and baptism, and the subsequent death of Monica, his

mother, at Rome in the autumn of 387. Our second source is that of the Life written by his friend and fellow bishop, Possidius of Calama (Guelma), which is mainly concerned to describe Augustine's career from ordination to his death at Hippo in 430. Thirdly, a considerable amount of evidence is afforded by the various writings of Augustine himself, and in particular, by his letters and sermons, and the work called the Retractations, composed towards the end of his life in 426, in which he passed in review upon all his works published up to that time, explaining the circumstances which led to their composition and indicating certain points on which he had changed his opinion or modified it in the light of subsequent reflection. The fourth source which affords us evidence of the life of Augustine is composed of the writings of others, both friends and enemies. From these various sources and the cross-light which they shed upon each other, one is able to discern not simply the details of Augustine's life and career, but also, as has already been seen, something of the personal and intellectual influences which moulded his theological outlook, and more importantly still, the quality of his own faith and spirituality as they deepened through encounter with life and death. In this latter respect, the death of his mother, reference to which has already been made in passing, must stand out as being of crucial significance. For here in the intensity of the pain of bereavement is to be found the quintessence of Augustine's theology of the life after death and with it, the epitome of the authentic Christian reaction to the shock of death and the way it naturally flowed into prayer for the deceased.

In the ninth book of his Confessions,[88] Augustine describes how while he, his brother and mother, were travelling back from Milan to Africa, at Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, Monica was taken ill with a fever and went into a coma. Augustine and his brother Navigius hastened to their mother's side there to keep watch. As death approached, Augustine recalls how his mother recovered consciousness, announcing to her sons the desire that 'here you will bury your mother'. To this remark Augustine kept silent, restraining his tears; but Navigius, anxious to comfort his mother, expressed the hope that she would

meet death in her own country and not abroad. Monica, apparently disturbed by such worldly hopes, paused and eventually said to her sons: 'Lay this body anywhere. Let no care of it disturb you: this only I ask of you that you should remember me at the altar of the Lord wherever you may be.'[89] With that, Monica fell silent and Augustine goes on to record, her 'devout and holy soul was released from the body'.[90]

Augustine himself closed her eyes, and in a very moving passage he goes on to describe the terrible grief he experienced. And yet throughout that day he shed no tear for he felt that 'it was not fitting that her funeral should be solemnized with moaning and weeping and lamentation, for so it is normal to weep when death is seen as sheer misery or as complete extinction.'[91] After the chanting of several psalms, the corpse was taken out for burial and, as was customary, prayers and ' the sacrifice of our redemption was offered for her'[92] at the graveside. All the day it would seem he remained in deepest unhappiness, praying that God would heal his sorrows. In fact, the depth of his grief was probably not known till some ten years after the event when Augustine came to write up his thoughts, and then it is interesting to note he expresses sentiments of a different kind:

> Now that my heart is healed of that wound, in which there was perhaps too much earthly affection, I pour forth to thee, O our God, tears of a very different sort for thy handmaid - tears that flow from a spirit shaken by the thought of the perils there are for every soul that dies in Adam. For though she had been made alive in Christ, and while still in the body had so lived that thy name was glorified in her faith and her character, yet I dare not say that from the moment of her regeneration in baptism no word issued from her mouth contrary to thy Command. Your Son, who is Truth, has said: 'Whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire'; and it would go ill with the most praiseworthy life lived by men, if thou were to examine it with thy mercy laid aside! but because Thou do not enquire too fiercely into our sins, we have hope and confidence of a place with You. Yet if a man reckons up before thee the merits he truly has, what is he reckoning except thy own gifts? .... Thus, my Glory and my Life, God of my heart, leaving aside, for this time her good deeds, for which I give thanks to Thee in joy, I now

> pray to Thee for my mother's sins. Grant my prayer through the true Medicine of our wounds, who hung upon the cross and who now sitting at Thy right hand makes intercession for us. I know that she dealt mercifully, and from her heart forgave those who trespassed against her : do Thou also forgive such trespasses as she may have been guilty of in all the years since her baptism, forgive them, Lord, forgive them, I beseech Thee: enter not into judgment with her. Let Thy mercy be exalted above Thy justice for Thy words are true and Thou hast promised that the merciful shall obtain mercy... For on that day when her death was so close, she was not concerned that her body should be sumptuously wrapped or embalmed with spices, nor with any thought of choosing a monument or even for burial in her own country. Of such things she gave us no command, but only desired to be remembered at Thy Altar, which she had served without ever missing so much as a day, on which she knew that the only Victim was offered .... To this sacrament of our redemption Thy handmaid had bound her soul by the bond of faith. Let none wrest her from Thy protection; let neither the lion nor the dragon bar her way by force or craft. For she will not answer that she owes nothing, lest she should be contradicted and confuted by that cunning accuser: but she will answer that her debts have been remitted by Him, to whom no one can hand back the price which He paid for us, though He owed it not. [93]

At this point, it is interesting to note, that Augustine goes on to remember his father also, joining his name to that of Monica:

> So let her rest in peace, together with her husband, for she had no other before nor after him, but served him, in patience bringing forth fruit for Thee, and winning him likewise for Thee. And inspire, O my Lord my God, inspire Thy servants my brethren. Thy sons my masters, whom I serve with heart and voice and pen, that as many of them as read this may remember at Thy altar Thy servant Monica, with Patricius, her husband, by whose bodies Thou didst bring me into this life, though how I know not. May they with loving mind remember these who were my parents in this transitory light, my brethren who serve Thee as our Father in our Catholic mother, and those who are to be fellow citizens with me in the eternal Jerusalem, which Thy people sigh for in their pilgrimage from birth until they come there; so that what my mother at her end asked of me may be fulfilled more richly in the prayers of so many gained for her by my Confessions than by my prayers alone. [94]

In this description of his mother's death, and particularly in this final prayer, Augustine provides us with a unique insight into the mind of the fourth century African Christian. At one

level, nothing of the early Christian attitude to death is lost. The atmosphere of the passage is triumphant for the death of Monica was neither 'sheer misery' nor 'complete extinction'; and the positive thrust of Augustine's prayers for his mother is graphically reflected in the character of her funeral in this respect, it not being thought fitting for a Christian funeral to be 'solemnized with moaning and weeping and lamentation'.[95] The confidence of his prayer and the simplicity of his petition that his mother should 'rest in peace' is at one with traditional Christian expectation, and recalls those primitive Christian epitaphs which were examined earlier.[96] The general tone of his intercession leaves no doubt as to his belief in his mother's blissful state, as one who was already saved and whose pardon was sealed. And yet, for all this, it is equally apparent that within this general confidence are to be distinguished other elements in St. Augustine's thought, notably the emphasis he places upon the removal of sin in the life after death. Admittedly, Augustine suggests that this thought was not foremost in his mind at the time of his mother's death; but on reflection, he concludes that though 'she had been made alive in Christ' and had led a virtuous life, yet she was not free from sin: 'I dare not say that from the moment of her regeneration in baptism no word issued from her mouth contrary to Your Command.' He therefore feels moved to pray to God for his mother's sins, beseeching God's mercy and forgiveness for 'such trespasses as she may have been guilty of in all the years since her baptism'. In this context, the offering of the eucharist for her repose, which it is to be noted is conceived of as occurring at frequent intervals after her death,[97] takes on a different nuance; for that which was once offered in thanksgiving for a virtuous life, is now pleaded as a means to the removal of sin, the sacrifice of Christ alone being considered of sufficient merit to gain our redemption, 'the price by which He purchased us'. The original idea underlying these commemorations, as we have noted, was the natural wish of those left behind to maintain their union with their departed relations and friends, and of this union, the Eucharistic fellowship was the deepest expression. The earliest prayers offered for the departed recognize

that death is no barrier to this inner communion, and that as the faithful departed have not yet attained their perfect consummation, it is legitimate to commend them to the mercy of God. Hence prayers for 'repose', 'refreshment', 'light' and 'peace' and also (but to a lesser extent) for cleansing, forgiveness and sanctification, find a place in the early liturgies of East and West. With Augustine, however, and here he is typical of the view that had come to prevail in the West during the fourth century, while expressing the belief that the dead are aided by the prayers of the Church and the 'saving sacrifice', ~~propounds~~ is to be found a conception of the Eucharistic sacrifice as propitiatory,[98] ~~which~~ This, combined with the growing tendency in the West to ascribe a place to punishment in the life after death for the faithful, resulted in a re-orientation of thought, which as developed later by Gregory the Great,[99] helped to foster the belief - so prevalent in the medieval period - that masses for the dead are specially beneficial in winning for the departed remission of sin or alleviation of their lot. Such a crude development is not, however, ascribable to Augustine. He merely testifies to the fact that his mother 'had bound her soul by the bond of faith to the sacrament of our redemption' and therefore feels confident to assert that though 'she will not answer that she owes nothing, lest she should be contradicted and confuted by that cunning accuser', (and one notes in passing the way in which ideas of merit are closely intertwined in Augustine's thought at this point), yet 'she will answer that her debts have been remitted by Him, to whom no one can hand back the price which He paid for us, though He owed it not.'

From this very personal testimony of Augustine, a number of inter-connected strands emerge. Prayer for the dead, for example, is seen not only to disclose Augustine's understanding of the state of the faithful departed, but also to bear the marks of accepted legalistic thought patterns, not to mention the problems associated with post-baptismal sin, the application of the principles of a penitential system and the questions relating

to eucharistic commemoration.[100] Each of these strands is really a theological issue in itself, and consequently they find frequent and varied exposition throughout Augustine's writings. A measure of attention will, therefore, be directed to each of them in turn in order to see how they relate to each other and ultimately how they elucidate the whole complex of Augustine's thought about life after death.

With regard to Augustine's understanding of the state of the departed, it should be stated as a preliminary to this discussion, that there is not a little ambiguity in his writings, an ambiguity which in the past has catered for divergent interpretations of his thought.[101] Even Portalié, who elsewhere exhibits a remarkable felicity for transforming tentative opinions into definitive statements, is forced to admit 'a certain vagueness in the ideas of St. Augustine' at this point.[102] The reasons for Augustine's ambiguity will become clearer as this study proceeds; but at this stage, suffice it to say that his reticence on some questions was as much due to his natural refusal to dogmatize in an area 'where agnosticism is assuredly the better part of wisdom,'[103] as to the confluence of various theological ideas in his mind, not the least of which was the tension resulting from the interaction of a rigid predestinarianism and a belief that there may be many souls who though saved, yet require refining from all taint of sin. Most Christians were apparently neither so transparently good,nor so transparently believing, that they could be said unequivocally to be destined for heaven; nor, on the other hand, were most Christians so clearly evil that they were destined for hell. A doctrine of an intermediate state which incorporated the possibility for growth and purification corresponded, at least at one level of experience, more exactly with the way men lived than an absolute alternative.

In view of Augustine's reticence on the subject, it is perhaps interesting to speculate on just how much diversity of opinion still existed in the West at this time. His lack of conclusive statements certainly implies that though there must have

been a considerable body of agreement on many issues, and even a consensus of opinion on the question of prayer for the dead, there was probably as yet no constant or authoritative tradition in the Church about all matters pertaining to the life after death.[104]

From the very first, Augustine seems to have envisaged some sort of separation in the state of the departed, with the just enjoying bliss and happiness, and the damned suffering in torture and anguish. This theme which, as we have seen, is virtually basic to the thought of all the Fathers in this matter, receives frequent exposition in Augustine's writings. For example, in 421 in the Enchiridion,[105] he can write as follows:

> But during the time which intervenes between a man's death and the resurrection at the last, men's souls are reserved in secret storehouses, at rest or in tribulation according to each soul's deserts, according to its lot in the flesh during life.[106]

And similarly, in 428, of the interval which separates death from the resurrection, he states that 'according to what they did ... so souls are either tortured or find rest.'[107] And elsewhere he writes that 'the soul is either borne to that place of punishments or to that other place where we find not corporal punishments, but quiet and joy.'[108] In other words, immediately after death, or so it would appear from these extracts, the eternal destiny of each soul is fixed - irrevocably. This is certainly the opinion which Augustine offered in 415 when expounding St. John's Gospel. There he contends that

> all souls have different fates when they leave this world. The good have joy; the bad, torments. But when the resurrection occurs, the joy of the good will be greater and the torments of the bad worse since they will then be tormented in the body.[109]

Furthermore it is apparent from this passage, and others like it, that the respective joys and sufferings of the righteous and the impious are only preliminary manifestations of their ultimate beautitude and degradation at the Last Day. The rewards and

punishments before the Last Judgement are only a shadow and 'like a dream' in relation to the future realities. This comparison is explicitly enunciated in a number of passages and notably in a sermon Augustine delivered on the martyrs Perpetua and Felicity, where although the present happiness of the saints is magnificently extolled in no uncertain terms - 'with what joy do they now partake of the spiritual banquet'[110] - he can still assert that this is but a part of the promised beautitude, a 'small particle'.[111] He preached as follows:

> This life which the blessed martyrs now enjoy although it bears no comparison with any joys or pleasures of our present world, is after all but a small particle of the promise - it is but a solace for its being deferred. But the day of recompense will come, when their bodies will be restored to them and the whole man will receive what he deserves .... As there is a wide difference between the joys and miseries of sleep and waking, so there is a wide difference between the torments and the comforts of death and of the resurrection.[112]

Thus, even the martyrs, even the great Perpetua and Felicity, are not to be thought of as enjoying the full blessedness of the vision of God which is their eventual destiny! Here Augustine would seem to go somewhat against the general trend of Western thought and particularly that of his African forbearers, Tertullian and Cyprian, who both ascribed to the martyrs immediate fulness of joy in the after-life.[113] This being the case, it should be said that Augustine's opinion was promoted not out of any disregard for the true status of the martyrs in the communion of the saints but rather as a logical consequence of certain theological presuppositions which he held about the relationship of the soul to the body and all that that entailed for his understanding of the attainment to the beatific vision and sensibility to suffering and joy (see above note 101). He explains his position elsewhere as follows:

> Although they have escaped from the shadow-world of the flesh, they cannot behold the unchanging substance (of God) in the manner in which the angels can behold it. The life everlasting with the angels begins only after the Last Judgement, and in the time between death

> and the Judgement, the natural desire of souls to serve the body has a restraining effect on their upward progress, and prevents them from rising to the highest heaven of fire in the Empyrean.[114]

Yet for all this, at the end of his life, it is clear from the Retractations that Augustine was unwilling utterly to deny to such souls the possibility of enjoying something that might be described as a contemplation of the face of God, and of truly seeing him face to face with the inward eye.[115] In fact in one place in another of his writings, he even goes so far as to suggest that all the saints and not simply the martyrs, may enjoy a common expectation after their earthly pilgrimage.

> Not such a place is that home of ours, Jerusalem, where all are good ... There all the just and holy enjoy the Word of God without reading .... For what is written for us in books they perceive through the face of God! O Great home of ours.[116]

It is most probable, therefore, that when Augustine does refer the retribution of man's works to the Last Judgement, he is not, as might appear, contradicting himself, or denying what he asserts of an individual judgment immediately after death, but rather designating the day of resurrection as a more solemn, public, and more complete retribution, (in fact, the term 'ultimate retribution' is Augustine's own expression)[117] whereby the preliminary differentiation in the state of the departed with its attendant joys or pains are ratified and consummated for eternity. To this extent one is perhaps justified in deducing the state of the departed between death and resurrection to be one in some sense, characterised by waiting, the final consummation being still to come. But if this is admitted implicitly by Augustine in virtue of the structure of his thought about the life to come, then it should be said that it is not central to his thought at this point; and in this, he is at one with the general trend which is observable in Western theology of the period. It is the immediacy of joy and suffering after death which occupies the forefront of attention in Augustine's writings and later patristic teaching in general.[118]

For example, with regard to the state of the wicked after death, Augustine asserts their lot to be that of immediate suffering. 'The burial place of hell, the depth of punishments which gnaws at the proud ... after this life.'[119] One notes that Augustine has no hesitation in designating this state as one of ' hell' (in carcere); and even in a sermon where he is concerned to describe the future tortures that await the damned, he can still add that 'even now the one thirsts in hell (apud inferos) for a drop of water from the finger of the beggar, while the other is happily resting in the bosom of Abraham.'[120] The term 'bosom of Abraham' frequently occurs in this respect as an antithetical designation for the bliss which the righteous enjoy after death. Thus in another sermon he can say:

> Forgive and then death will come as a father instead of as a judge. Instead of a tormentor, it will come as an angel to carry you to the bosom of Abraham. Instead of taking you to prison, it will lead you to paradise. [121]

Here the terms 'bosom of Abraham' and 'paradise' would seem to be synonymous, or at the very least, close approximations of the state of beautitude which the faithful departed enjoy. Sometimes, admittedly, Augustine makes the 'bosom of Abraham' and 'paradise' abodes distinct from the angelic heaven;[122] whereas elsewhere he seems to think this only to be a difference in terminology and says that the true abode of the souls of the just is God. 'God is our abode after this life.'[123] In any case, 'paradise' and the 'bosom of Abraham' are a place of happiness, one of the numerous mansions of heaven;[124] so that, on the one hand, in connection with the good thief, Augustine can claim that he was received immediately into Paradise, there to enjoy the blessings of the presence of Christ:

> The soul of the thief ... already blessed by the gift of Him ... was able to be with Him in paradise that same day.[125]

And on the other hand, in a moving tribute delivered upon the occasion of the abrupt death of his close friend Nebridius, Augustine can in a similar fashion talk of his friend's immediate entry into the bliss of Abraham's Bosom:

> Not long after our conversion and regeneration by Your baptism, You took him from this life, by then a baptized Catholic and serving You in Africa in perfect chastity among his own people, for he had made his whole family Christian. And now he lives in Abraham's Bosom. Whatever is meant by that bosom, there my Nebridius lives, my most beloved friend, Your son by adoption and no longer a freed-man only. There he lives. For what other place is there for such a soul? There he lives, in the place of which he asked me, an ignorant poor creature, so many questions. He no longer puts his bodily ear to my lips, but the lips of his spirit to Your fountain, drinking his fill of wisdom, all that his thirst requires, happy without end. [126]

From such passages as these it is clear that just as Augustine envisages the wicked at death being confined to hell, there to be chastised for eternity - though not necessarily without respite [127] - so equally he portrays the just taking their rest immediately after death in 'Paradise' or 'Abraham's Bosom'. There they receive refreshment from the heavenly meal which though it does not yet give absolute illumination to their souls, a joy reserved for the resurrection, does bring them both rest and a certain satisfaction of their spiritual hunger. Even these delights, however, are far outpassed by the sure and glorious refrigerium of the martyrs, to whom needless to say, Augustine accords the highest honour

> O happy abode! Faith knows it ... Where, then, are these saints? In a place of rest, there where everything is good. What more do you seek? You do not know the place; think of their merit! Wherever they are, they are with God - 'The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God.' [128]

The martyrs enjoy such happiness by virtue of their incorporation into Christ through their death. Thus -

> They have passed from this world to the Father. They sought Christ by their confession; they obtained Him by their death.[129]

Even more, these souls are not only with Christ, they actually reign with Him. This Kingdom is the lot of all who die in the Lord according to Rev. 14:13. Thus Augustine can assert in De Civitate Dei that 'although they do not yet have their bodies, their

souls already reign with Him.'[130] The martyrs are the coronati, those who have already won the crown [131] - a description that is in harmony with the manner in which they were represented in the art of that time, which usually shows them receiving a wreath in their veiled hands, or being crowned with a crown of laurel from the hand of God which reaches out of an opening of the heavens.[132] The martyrs are they who sit upon the seats of the holy (sedes sanctorum) at the heavenly feast, the messianic banquet, where the Lord feasts them upon his divinity.

> There is a great table (mensa), where the Lord of the feast is himself the repast. No man feasts his guests upon himself, but Christ the Lord does this thing; he himself is both host and also food and drink to his guests .... O happy souls, your suffering is over and your glory is come![133]

In this way Augustine accords to the martyrs their traditional high place in the intermediate condition of the next world.

If Augustine envisaged some sort of separation in the state of the departed with the just enjoying bliss and happiness and the damned suffering in torture and anguish - a separation instigated at death and ratified and consummated at the Day of Judgement - he could also maintain, with equal confidence, the proposition that there may be many souls who though saved, yet require refining from all taint of sin. Indeed it was in this category that he had placed his own saintly mother, for as we have already noted, although he knew his mother to have 'been made alive in Christ' and to have led a virtuous life, he yet felt unable to declare her free from all sin, and therefore felt moved to pray to God for her, beseeching God's mercy and forgiveness for 'such trespasses as she may have been guilty of in all the years since her baptism'. In spite of his rigid predestinationism, the stark alternative of Heaven or Hell appears to have failed to have satisfied Augustine's conception of either God's goodness, or of man's deserts!

Augustine's thought at this point is therefore not surprisingly, both highly complex and highly personalised, proceeding as

it does out of the ferment of one who was all-too-aware of his own sin and the errors of his past life. To Augustine it seemed inevitable that suffering would play its part in man's complete sanctification in the life to come since deeper penitence had to bring its measure of suffering. Nor were such notions by any means original to Augustine. They have been seen to enjoy a long lineage traceable from Clement of Alexandria (~~perhaps~~ even from Tertullian), and Origen, through latterly in the West to Cyprian, Lactantius, Hilary and Ambrose, all of whom in varying degrees and in different ways subscribed to the view that God's method of perfecting souls in the after-life must include suffering. What is original to Augustine, however, is the way in which he analyses and integrates this inherited thought, associating it very closely with an understanding of prayer for the faithful departed, and combining both with his own insights from Biblical exegesis, in so doing providing what was to become the substance of the medieval synthesis as expounded in the doctrine of Purgatory.[134] Of Augustine's understanding of purification in the after-life, the nature of the purgatorial fire and its relation to suffrages for the dead, much has been written, and it is not possible in this short space to reproduce an entire summary of all his thought, an excellent analysis of which already exists in the work of Joseph Ntedika (L'Évolution de la Doctrine du Purgatoire chez Saint Augustin, Paris 1966). All that is possible here is a broad outline of the above themes with a view to what has already been said of Augustine's view of the state of the departed and his overall understanding of the meaning and goal of human existence.

Commenting on the meaning of St. Paul's words about being saved 'yet so as by fire' (I Cor. 3: 11-15), Augustine says:

> Whether, therefore, men undergo such sufferings in this life only, or whether some such judgements follow also after this life, I do not think this view of the passage to conflict with truth and reason.[135]

In this statement we are presented with the essence of the Augustinian position which has been traced above, with suffering being seen as the means to purgation, the inevitable consequence

and penalty of sin, and the purpose of life as nothing less than the attainment of the vision of God. Given the fact that God in his sovereign will draws to Himself those whom He wills, and the fact that the death of an individual sets an irrevocable seal upon his destiny as worked out in his lifetime, Augustine is nevertheless prepared to entertain the proposition that within the broad differentiation of 'saved' and 'reprobate' there are those who while not meriting eternal damnation, yet require purification to purge them of their sin and make them fit to stand in the presence of God at the Last Day; and this penitential process Augustine further suggests if not already begun this side of death, probably occurs after it. Augustine's only solicitude in advocating this position (which, let it be noted, he does not do dogmatically) is lest a vain hope should be held out to Christians of being saved by a purgatorial fire hereafter without endeavouring to live well here.

We find Augustine expressing similar sentiments to those found in the De Fide et Operibus, in the Enchiridion, where he says that the fire of which St. Paul speaks, may be the fire of tribulation, and then goes on to say that -

> It is not beyond belief that something of the sort takes place even after this life, and there is room for inquiry whether it is so, and the answer may be found (or not found) to be that a certain number of the faithful are the more belatedly or the more speedily saved, through a sort of chastising fire, the more they have or the less they have set their affections on the good things that perish: not, however, those of whom the pronouncement was made that they shall not obtain possession of the Kingdom of God, unless, on their doing appropriate penance, those crimes are forgiven them.[136]

Similarly in the De Civitate Dei, Augustine can note that :

> After the death of this body until we come to the last day of condemnation and reward which follows the resurrection of our bodies - if in this interval of time the spirits of the departed are said to suffer such a fire - not to be felt by those whose characters and affections in this bodily life have not required the burning of their wood, hay, stubble, but to be felt by others who have bought with them that kind of building - whether only here they find the fire of transitory tribulation to burn up their wordly and yet pardonable

> things, or whether they find it there, or find it here that they may not find it there - I do not dispute it, for perhaps it may be true.[137]

In fact, earlier on in the same work, he is even more explicit, asserting that:

> Temporal punishments are endured by some in this life only, by some after death, by some both now and then - only before the last dread judgement. Not all who suffer temporal punishments after death come to everlasting punishments which will follow upon that judgement. For some who are not forgiven in this world, are forgiven in the world to come, that is, that they may not be punished with the eternal torment of the world to come.[138]

In all these passages Augustine is concerned to stress the fact that at no time is he suggesting the view that either the wicked will, after this life, be subject to period of punishment and then be saved (as did Origen, of course), or for that matter, that life as we experience it this side of death is of little consequence since reparation is possible later. On the contrary, Augustine refutes both propositions adamantly - 'It is here and now that a man acquires any merit or demerit through which after this life he becomes capable of relief or depression. So let no man expect that after his death he can make up in the sight of God for his omissions while here.'[139] What Augustine is rather concerned to do in these statements is simply to affirm the possibility that 'at the resurrection of the dead there will be some to whom, after the punishments which the spirits of the dead endure, mercy will be shown, in their not being sent into eternal fire.'[140] Indeed it is highly noteworthy that Augustine himself, in his commentary on the Psalms, could ask God to purify him in this life so that he would not have to suffer after death the purifying fie (*emendatorio igne*).[141] In fact, so great was his conviction of sin that during his terminal illness, Augustine voluntarily undertook a ten-day period of penance in solitude in order to prepare himself to meet his Maker - an incident which we shall have cause to comment on later.

But what is this fire, this *ignis emendatorius*, this *ignis purgatorius*, of which Augustine speaks? For example, is it

to be identified with the 'material fire' of Hell which is supposed to torture the damned?[142] Certainly Augustine is not frightened of emphasising the intensity of any purgatorial suffering:

> Although surely saved through fire, that fire will nevertheless be more grievous than anything man can suffer in this life. And you know how much the evil have suffered and can suffer.[143]

But from elsewhere in his commentary on Ps.37, in which Augustine explicitly distinguishes the two kinds of fire, the one of Hell, the one of expiation for the just: 'He will convert those who will be saved by means of fire',[144] it is clear that no such crude identification of the two was in his mind.[145] In fact it would be true to say that Augustine never really ventured to commit himself to any one view beyond that of asserting his belief in 'some sort of cleansing fire' (per ignem quendam purgatorium),[146] one that 'burns 'ere it transforms' - to borrow a famous phrase.[147] Sometimes this fire is located by Augustine in the interval between death and judgment, as has been seen. Sometimes, it is more associated with the fire of trials and punishments in this life[148] and in other places it is death itself with its pains.[149] Occasionally it is even the fire of the Last Judgement which is seen as completing the purification of some souls. Thus Augustine can write: 'Let not a man think of any future purgatorial pains, except before that last tremendous Judgement.'[150] Or again, even more clearly: 'then after judgement when they shall have been cleansed even by fire ... in all the saints no evil shall be found.'[151]

At no time, therefore, is Augustine (like Ambrose before him) willing to commit himself irrevocably to any one interpretation. Ntedika is surely mistaken in his attempt to construct a case for a development in Augustine's thought at this point.[152] It is Ntedika's opinion that in the early stages of Augustine's career, Augustine upheld the location of the fire of purgation at the end of the period between death and resurrection, identifying it with the fire of judgement - as did many patristic commentators - but that towards the end of his life, Augustine changed his view,

transferring the fire more specifically to the intermediate period between death and resurrection, which henceforth becomes identifiable. The state of purgation ends at the Last Judgement because the final sentence recognises only the elect and the reprobate.[153] Such a development which might be seen as marking the transition from Patristic thought to the more formalised pattern of medieval theology, while attractive in some of its aspects, is surely too simplistic a view of the evidence. Ntedika himself, for example, is forced to admit that the two quotations taken from De Civitate Dei which was completed towards the end of Augustine's career (and which are quoted above) would tell against his hypothesis.[154] Furthermore, as Portalié is forced to point out,[155] Augustine would not be loath to admit with other of the Fathers - St. Hilary, for example - the purification of certain souls at the very moment of judgement according to the sayings of Malachi 3 : 1-6 and Isaiah 4 : 4. To quote St. Augustine: 'It seems more clear that some souls in that judgement shall suffer some kind of cleansing punishments.'[156] Statements such as these would go against Ntedika and instead serve to underline Augustine's reticence in this area of thought which was correspondingly inclusive rather than exclusive in scope, and which hesitated at too close a definition - 'I do not dispute it, for perhaps it may be true.'

And for similar reasons one should be equally apprehensive about accepting the verdict of Portalié who without the slightest hesitation can assert that Augustine was 'absolutely certain' about the existence of Purgatory.[157] Such a dogmatic statement does little justice to the bishop's academic caution, and moreover, applies later formalised terminology in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. At no time was Augustine overtaken by the Western desire for theological formulation which might have led him into defining places rather than widely-differing conditions in the life beyond. Still less was he tempted to apportion detailed awards and punishments to the good and bad in the intermediate state as later medieval theologians were wont to do. Augustine was rather satisfied with grounds for hoping that whatever

knowledge of God, trust in God, love of God lies in our character at death, will be fully developed in that love in ways which, though probably not without cost to ourselves, are nevertheless ways not yet wholly foreseeable.

Indeed it is here, in his understanding of the goal and purpose of the spiritual life, that the true context of his thought on the subject is to be found. All too frequently in discussions of Augustine's theology of the after-life and the rôle of purgative suffering, interest becomes rivetted upon his understanding of the relationship between sin and punishment and the penitential system almost to the exclusion of any appreciation of his spirituality. Such imbalance is detrimental to an overall perspective. It is hoped, therefore, that as with Origen and many other of the Fathers to whom attention has been directed in the course of this survey, consideration of Augustine's personal spirituality[158] which itself embraces much of his thought on penitential discipline, will illuminate some of the presuppositions of his opinions and provide a suitable theological context for further analysis and discussion.

Throughout his Christian life Augustine believed that it is through the life of moral activity that men become fit for the contemplation of God which for him alone constituted man's summum bonum.[159] Indeed, it would be true to say that for Augustine, all human activity has to be directed towards the possession of God.[160] Man's quest is not to be for intellectual enlightenment[161] but for that 'knowledge which issues only out of the personal contact of life with life'. Thus in De Civitate Dei[162] he can give a summary of the ideal of peace to which the Christian life is tending, as one in which not only the rebellion of man has ceased, man no longer being at odds with his Creator's purpose, but also one in which there is a positive acceptance of harmonious relationships that fulfils God's intention. All this is involved in the pursuit of perfection, whereby man's life, understanding and love are perpetually renewed and deepend by grace.[163] In a sermon on the healing of the man born blind, Augustine says:

> Our whole business in this life is to heal the heart's eye by which God is seen. For this the holy mysteries are celebrated, for this the word of God is preached; this end is served by the Church's moral exhortations, touching the correction of conduct, the amendment of carnal desires; the renouncing of this world not with our lips only but by a changed life; this end is served by all Holy Scripture: that the inner man may be purged from that which hinders us from looking upon God.[164]

The specifically Christian ethic (as distinct from that of the Neo-Platonist) in this process of healing, which is here seen to involve variously correction, mortification, renunciation and purgation, is one based on the Incarnation.[165] For as Augustine writes elsewhere, 'there are some who think that they can be purified for the contemplation of God and for union with Him by their own virtue - whose pride is itself the deepest stain upon them; for there is no fault to which the law of God is more contrary.'[166] Against such notions, Augustine repeatedly stressed the fact that the apprehension of God is a gift not an achievement,[167] and the gift of God is at once the gift of his healing love and the gift of his unmerited forgiveness, as found in the person of Jesus Christ. Both these aspects consequently find a place in his theology of the spiritual life.

Thus, for example, throughout his writings one finds Augustine testifying to the drawing power of the love of God as that which is crucial for the growth of man in holiness and for the exercise of his true freedom. 'My weight is my love. By it I am carried wherever I am carried. By your gift, we are enkindled and are carried upward. We burn inwardly, and move forward .... we go forward because we go up to the peace of Jerusalem.'[168] The love that gives freedom to man's will is moreover enkindled within him as he participates in the dying and rising of Christ, so that when Augustine speaks of the imitation of Christ and of the Christian pilgrimage as one of following and participating in the sufferings of Christ, he is describing a dynamic movement in which man is caught up into love by the love of God. The spiritual life on this understanding becomes a positive movement, one not necessarily without a measure of pain, but certainly one in which 'we are renewed'.[169]

It is a process which must also necessarily extend beyond death as it seeks ultimate fulfilment in the perfection of love in the contemplation of God. Reflection upon heaven can, therefore, never be a futile or even dangerously misleading activity for Augustine. For what is involved is a perception of oneself as being formed by the attractive power of the love of God.

In a similar way Augustine can also view the spiritual life in terms of repentance, forgiveness and purgation. To repeat, the apprehension of God is a gift not an achievement. And sin which is the only barrier between man and God, and one that disabilitates him in his search for his creator, can also only be purged by an act of God.[170] The one purgation for iniquity and pride is in 'the blood of the Righteous and the humility of God.'[171] Thus although the soul's cleansing is a journey - a journey which involves the elimination of imperfections and which ultimately leads through mortification to union with God - it is a journey which we could not make, had not the Way itself come down to us in the person of Jesus Christ.[172] Augustine summarised his thought in this matter when he wrote that

> What is evil is the will's aversion from the changeless Good and its conversion to the goods that are changing; and this aversion and conversion, being voluntary, and not compelled, is followed by the fit and just punishment of misery.[173]

In this definition is disclosed one of the presuppositions of Augustinian spirituality, for his view of the nature of man's sin is seen to be the direct corollary of his view of the summum bonum. At one level it is the failure to love God. At another level it is the inevitable transference of love to objects which, though good in themselves, being God's creatures, are nevertheless goods less than the highest [174] which for Augustine can only be the contemplation of the unchangeable, and to human eyes invisible, substance of God. [175] Such an understanding in part reflects the influence of Neo-Platonism; but his definition also betrays the influence of the penitential system, with suffering being seen as the inevitable consequence and penalty of sin.[176]

As has already been noted in connection with the thought of St. Cyprian and other of the Fathers, it was the developing penitential system with its specifically juridical connotations of merit and its punitive, as opposed to ameliorative or educative, conception of suffering, that was proving to be particularly influential of Western theology,[177] providing as it did, an acceptable theological framework in which theologians could formulate notions of purgational discipline in the after-life into a logically coherent system. By the time of Augustine, it is clear that men believed more firmly than ever that after baptism the true Church could forgive even the gravest of sins and that she did forgive them at least once. Thanks to the power of the keys, the true Church, and she alone, could open this portal of need to repentant sinners.[178]

For ordinary people who led decent lives and gave offence to nobody, such authority was of little consequence. There was nothing in the way of any 'auricular confession' or of extra-liturgical devotions required of them, except that which they made in their own personal prayers. They expiated their daily sins and sins of weakness by beating their breasts at the 'Forgive us our trespasses', by giving alms[179] and by other works of charity which 'covers a multitude of sins'.[180] It was Augustine's opinion that God forgives sins of this kind when there is prayer, fasting and almsgiving.[181] The great 'public penanceof repentance and lamentation', as it was called, was not something that should ordinarily occur in the normal Christian life,[182] but public penance was considered imperative when a sin had been committed of such a nature that grave public scandal had been caused. In such cases, it would seem that the bishop was in the habit of publicly imposing the penance in the form of an ecclesiastical judgement. The reconciliation would similarly take place in the church in the presence of the congregation. This reconciliation was considered a true remission of the guilt of sin.[183] In cases of mortal sins that had remained partly or wholly secret, one could go to the bishop in private. The latter would then personally (but privately) pronounce the ban, would give the penitent a homily, and would later (again privately) relax the ban.

In either case, if after reconciliation had been effected a man were to fall again into sin, the Church it was thought, could not help him. The man who fell a second time might indeed hope for forgiveness from God, but he could no longer obtain it from the Church,[184] and here was possibly the reason why those who had incurred the ban often hesitated to ask for reconciliation, and why those who had grave sins on their conscience tended to postpone their request for a penance till they lay dying. Penance on the deathbed counted as the equivalent of the 'great public penance', exactly as though it had been performed in the presence of the whole congregation.[185] Since this possibility always continued to exist, many were reluctant even to start the lengthy mortifications of the penance while they still had their health, while others did not complete them, for once they had effected their reconciliation, they would in this life have had nothing further to hope for from the Church. To those who did fall a second time, the bishops could only enjoin them to lay strict penances on themselves privately, to give alms, pray in secret and practice continence. They could still hope for forgiveness from God, though not from the Church on earth which they had desecrated a second time.

In view of the structure of the penitential system and the way in which by the time of Augustine penitential discipline both in its longevity and its severity had come to be increasingly commensurate with the gravity of the sin committed, with mortification being cast in a punitive rôle, one can see why Augustine, like his Latin predecessors, saw no theological objection in the extension of this 'system' beyond death, finding it a mere logical progression to assign to the after-life a penitential rôle. No doubt this was as much a matter of pastoral expediency as of theological consistency, offering as it did an answer to those who questioned the ultimate destiny of those who died 'excommunicate' - they may yet be saved because there will be opportunity for them to do penance for their sins after this life; and a challenge to those who protracted their periods of penance for selfish motives - if you do not do penance for your

sins now, you will pay for it later! The accepted ecclesiastical discipline also illuminates passages from Augustine which have been quoted earlier where a certain gradation in the expected discipline of suffering in the after-life is envisaged. For example, from the Enchiridion:

> A certain number of the faithful are the more belatedly or the more speedily saved, through a sort of chastising fire, the more they have or the less they have set their affections on the good things that perish : not, however, those of whom the pronouncement was made that they shall not obtain possession of the Kingdom of God, unless, on their doing appropriate penance, those crimes are forgiven them.[186]

And similarly, in the De Civitate Dei, where Augustine's systematic treatment of the subject is even clearer -

> Temporal punishments are endured by some in this life only, by some after death, by some both now and then - only before the last dread judgement. Not all who suffer temporal punishments after death, come to everlasting punishments which will follow upon that judgement. For some who are not forgiven in this world, are forgiven in the world to come, that is, that they may not be punished with the eternal torment of the world to come. [187]

In both these passages is reflected the accepted almost 'categorization' of the faithful which is apparent in the penitential system, with those who by virtue of their acquired merit and their few sins require only minimal discipline after death (and perhaps none); and those who in view of their repeated lapses into grave sin find themselves outside the forgiveness of the church on earth but who may after not some little punishment, yet be saved; and then again, those Christians who being between the two extremes, will presumably require some purgation in the after-life. Martyrs, needless to say, are exempt from all such remedial discipline requiring no purgation beyond that which they endured in their own victorious deaths. Similarly baptized infants who have died before committing any personal sins are considered by Augustine to be outside this process.[188] He explicitly states that

> Not only is such an infant not destined for eternal punishment, but it does not even suffer any cleansing torments after death.[189]

Apart from the case of martyrs and baptised infants Augustine would seem to make no other exemptions from what is otherwise the norm of purgative suffering in the after-life. As has already been mentioned, Augustine was not even so presumptuous as to have assumed his own mother to have been free from all taint of sin, and therefore considered her to be in need of some sort of purification. Nor for that matter was he presumptuous in his estimation of his own spiritual state. Augustine had always held that no baptized Christian, not even a bishop of saintly life(!), ought to leave this world without showing worthy and simple penitence; and true to his principles, he undertook a severe penance during his terminal illness (perhaps with a view to ameliorating any purgatorial discipline that might await him?) He caused the seven penitential (?) psalms to be written on leaves of vellum and had them hung on the wall by his bed, so that he could study them continually with many tears, so great was his conviction of sin.[190] Ten days before he died he requested his friends to visit him only when the physician came or when food was brought, so that he might spend his whole time in prayer. And so he died on the 28th August, at the age of 76. He was buried and the Holy Sacrifice was offered on his behalf.[191]

From instances such as these and from the presuppositions of the contemporary theology which have been outlined here, one can see not only the atmosphere of thought in which Augustine lived and taught, but also the way in which the penitential system in all its extrapolations could become so closely interwoven with Augustine's view of the spiritual life, as a process of repentance, forgiveness and purgation, thus giving vent to a whole complex of ideas about sin, punishment, merit and the necessity for purification after death. This side of Augustine's thought, as I have already stressed, is to be balanced with all that has been said of his view of life as a movement in which we are drawn by God's love into love. For the two themes which at one level exist in a theological tension, are at another level, drawn by Augustine into a deeper synthesis in his theology of prayer which itself enfolds the various notions of attraction, illumination, purgation,

mortification and contemplation.[192] In so doing Augustine provides us with both the focus for his spirituality and also a mirror to his theology of the Christian life, in which as we have seen the state of the departed occupies an integral rôle.

In his treatise De Quantitate Animae, written shortly after his baptism, Augustine distinguishes seven grades or degrees (gradus) in the functions or operations of the soul, which he sees as the principle of life, sensation, intelligence and morality. The precise numeration of these degrees in prayer is immaterial. Suffice it to say that in the early stages of prayer Augustine envisages there being a longing for God, for something not clearly known or yet understood. This longing, this thirst for God, will become more clearly differentiated, as the destruction of vices in the soul and the elimination of imperfections take place. Thus the fifth grade is characterised by Augustine as 'tranquillitas', the calming of the passions; and the sixth as 'ingressio', the approach to contemplation, which itself constitutes the seventh and final stage. In its essence (though not in detail) this thought reflects much of the earlier thought of Origen on the subject though these last three stages which Augustine mentions correspond in idea though not in nomenclature more to the division which later writers were to make in terms of the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways of prayer. Augustine himself reserves the actual word 'purgation' for the fourth grade, which he regards as a necessary preliminary to further growth. In the fifth stage God reforms the soul, in the sixth he leads it and in the seventh he feeds it and perfects it in love;[193] for 'it is one thing to purify the soul, and another to keep it pure; one thing to restore it when sullied, another not to suffer it to become sullied again.'[194] More than once, Augustine insists upon the truth that not until this purification of the soul has been effected, not until it has been 'cleansed and healed', can it proceed to the contemplation of God which is the 'highest reward of the saints'.[195]

It should not be thought from this delineation of stages or degrees in prayer that Augustine envisaged some sort of arbitrary division in the spiritual life into neat compartments whereby an individual might progress from one stage to another on completion of a course of treatment! Nor should it be imagined that Augustine thought within the confines of a temporal framework whereby, for example, stages one to four might be completed in this life, and the rest hereafter. No such structure was in his mind. It was rather Augustine's wish to testify to that diversity of experience which was the common possession of all Christians who persevered in the life of prayer and to give it some cohesion and significance. It was his opinion that although the spiritual life was in its essence a deepening of one's love of God, and consequently a 'progression', it was not a process open to simple evaluation. For example, like Origen before him, Augustine held that while penitence is to be seen as the beginning of the spiritual life, this is not equivalent to saying that it is a stage to be left behind. In fact in many ways, it is not a stage at all for Augustine, but a condition that must in some sense continue permanently, both now and after death, as the constant attitude of all who truly aspire to be united with God in love. Similarly it is apparent that although Augustine asserted contemplation to be the ultimate reward of the saints in heaven, and therefore, something that really belongs to the next life, he yet held it possible for some beginnings of it to occur in this life, some passing glimpses or intuitions of divine things.[196]

In this way Augustine was as equally capable of interpreting the spiritual life in terms of a cyclic movement as he was at describing it within the more conventional categories pertaining to a linear progression. The soul acquires that which it already possesses in order to effect a deeper surrender. Contemplation is as much a present possession to be deepened and renewed as a distant goal to which we travel. Augustine's thought about the spiritual life is perpetually caught within the tension that exists between these two ideas, emerging as it does out of the recognition of the paradox that love contains within itself the promise and

reality of its own fulfilment, and that God will not fail to 'crown his gifts'. Thus he can write as follows:

> It is He whom we long to receive, who makes us ask; He whom we desire to find, who makes us seek ... And when He has been received, He still works in us on asking ~~and~~ and a seeking, that He may be received more abundantly.[197]

The text 'Seek his face evermore' was one that Augustine loved to ponder. God always comes to meet the seeker, the search is continuously rewarding, though it discloses only the infinite perspective beyond our attainment.[198] Does the seeking belong to this life only, questions Augustine, one in which 'faith already finds Him, hope still seeks Him, and love finds Him through faith, yet seeks to possess Him through sight?' Augustine is not sure. He begins to wrestle with the idea that the realization of such communion with God implies a notion of 'life' surpassing the limits of our all-too-lazy imaginations. The possibility arises from an experience of life and an awareness of a potential for growth at once conditioned by, yet independent of, the constraints of our present existnece, or of the limitations of our probable future time. It may well be that even after death, even at the Last Day when we will see God as He is, He will yet be _sine fine quaerendus quia sine fine amandus_: if there is no end to love's increase, love's seeking, the deepening of its apprehension, it may be that the contemplation of God will itself yield an infinite perspective for growth.[199] This, the focal point to which Augustine's spirituality converges, or alternatively, the centre around which it pivots, is appropriately enough, no static conceit but a living, dynamic conception, the still point which itself yields the principle of movement that unites and vitalises Augustine's whole thought about life, death and the hereafter.

In this examination of the spirituality of Augustine, I have tried to explore a dimension of Augustine's thought not usually associated with his theology of the state of the departed, with a view both to illuminating a number of the basic presuppositions behind his thinking and to placing the entire discussion within the

wider context of Augustine's understanding of the goal and purpose of life, which as I have attempted to demonstrate, is integral to his thought at this point. This complete, it is appropriate to move onto an examination of Augustine's views concerning prayer for the dead, which as was indicated earlier, he closely associates with his conception of the purgative discipline in the after-life.

That Augustine accepted and entirely approved the traditional practice of praying for the faithful departed is obvious both from his own personal prayers, some of which have already been examined, and from his recurrent expositions of the subject in his writings. In a previous chapter, for example, we noted Augustine's embroilment in the controversy surrounding Aerius, who is supposed to have numbered among his many errors a repudiation of the validity of the custom of prayer for the dead. Augustine's condemnation of Aerius[200] requires no further comment here; it only serves to underline the universality of the custom and its complete acceptability to Augustine who never questions either its propriety or its efficacy. It was for him, an integral part of the deposit of faith:

> It has come down to us from the Fathers, and is universally held in the Church, that we should pray for those who died in the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, when they are commemorated in their proper place at the Sacrifice.[201]

Augustine expresses himself on the subject in a similar vein on several occasions (for example, <u>De cura pro mortuis gerenda</u>), but the most comprehensive and succinct passage is in the <u>Enchiridion</u> where he argues as follows:

> Nor is there room for denial that the souls of the deceased obtain relief through the dutiful service of their friends who are alive, when the Mediator's sacrifice is offered for them or almsgiving is done in the Church. Such acts, however, are of advantage to those who during their life have deserved that such acts should be of advantage to them. For there is a certain manner of living, neither good enough to dispense with the need for these after death, or bad enough to preclude their being of advantage to it after death; and there is a manner of living which is so

> established in goodness as to dispense with the need for them, as again there is one so established in evil as to be incapable of benefiting even from these when it has passed on from this life. Therefore, it is here and now that a man acquires any merit or demerit through which after this life he becomes capable of relief or depression. So let no man expect that after his death he can make up in the sight of God for his omissions while here. Thus, these services which the Church repeatedly performs for the commendation of the departed are in in no way opposed to that apostolic statement which says: For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive in accordance with the things he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad; because each of them, while living in the body, has acquired for himself even this merit, the possibility of their being of advantage to him. For they are not of advantage to everybody. And why are they not of advantage to everybody, unless because of the differences between the life which each one has lived in the body? At such times then as the sacrifices either of the altar or of any manner of alms are offered for all the baptized departed, on behalf of the very good they are thanksgivings, on behalf of the not very bad they are propitious, while on behalf of the very bad, though they are no sort of assistance to the dead, they are some sort of consolation to the living. And in cases where they are of advantage, the advantage is either that they obtain complete remission, or at least that damnation itself becomes less intolerable.[202]

In this passage Augustine draws together a number of strands in his thought. For example, (to reiterate what has already been noted in connection with Augustine's prayer for his mother) it is clear that although prayer for the dead is at one level a spontaneous offering of love by the bereaved for the departed, and consequently essentially a private, personal devotion; at a theological level, it is something which for Augustine properly co-inheres and flows out of the corporate prayer of the Church, and more especially, out of the celebration of the Eucharist. The sacrifice of Christ is alone considered to be of sufficient merit to gain our redemption, and Augustine frequently propounds a theory of eucharistic sacrifice as propitiatory.[203] Such an offer is however, considered by Augustine to be beneficial to the faithful departed alone. Indeed he goes to great pains to stress this point, as is apparent not simply from the passages quoted above but also from the numerous other references that could be cited. For example, in answering

certain questions which one Dulcitius propounded to him, of which the second was whether the eucharistic sacrifice when offered for the repose of the departed, conferred any benefit upon their souls, Augustine replies:

> There are some souls whom such things help in no way, whether they be offered for those whose evil deeds made them unworthy of being helped, or for those whose good deeds render such help unnecessary. [204]

Similarly in the same work, Augustine can write:

> We must not deny that the souls of the departed are relieved by the piety of survivors, when the Sacrifice of the Mediator is offered for them; but it is efficacious only for those who in life earned the right of being benefited. [205]

Or to give another example, in a sermon on the text 'I would not have you be ignorant concerning them who are asleep', he can state that -

> for those who die without that faith which works by love, and without the Sacraments of the Church, it is vain that their friends should spend upon them duties which natural affection suggests. [206]

In De Civitate Dei Augustine can state quite simply but very emphatically that 'Prayer is not offered for the unbelieving and unholy dead.' [207] This opinion is entirely in keeping with what we have seen of the close inter-relation which exists between Augustine's views on predestination, the finality of death and the preliminary differentiation which occurs in the state of the departed immediately after death; and reflects, moreover, his usual concern with merit. Our real need is to become fit for the vision of God and consequently the whole purpose of this temporal existence is 'to win the merit whereby we may live in eternity.' [208] Nor is it surprising to find him following up this bold declaration in De Civitate Dei with the argument that men must earn by their lives a participation in the prayers of the faithful to be offered for them after their death. Similar sentiments are to be found in the Enchiridion:- 'such acts are of advantage to those who during their life have deserved that such acts should be of advantage to them' and again, 'each of them (i.e. the departed) while living in

the body, has acquired for himself even this merit, the possibility of their being of advantage to him.' Elsewhere in one of his replies to Dulcitius, Augustine is even more precise contending that the effect produced by the prayers and oblations offered for any particular individual 'will be regulated exactly by the kind of life which he led.'[209]

This correlation of theological motifs is further exemplified in Augustine's understanding of the purpose of prayer for the dead, exhibiting as it does a two-fold emphasis which reflects the two streams of thought delineated in our exposition of his spirituality. For just as Augustine can view the spiritual life in terms of a growth in love and a movement involving repentance, forgiveness and purgation; so he can equally interpret the expenditure of prayer for the departed in terms of prayer for a deepening in love and for forgiveness of sins and, by implication, for the alleviation of any purgatorial suffering (though this latter point, it should be stressed is admitted by Augustine <u>only</u> by implication, it being largely secondary to the main thrust of his thought at this point). The double perspective finds typical expression in the death of his mother where prayer is offered initially in thanksgiving for her virtuous life and in confident expectation of her continued possession and advancement in the joy that was rightly hers; and latterly for her sins, that she might be forgiven and so escape the perils that await 'every soul that dies in Adam'. One also finds it reflected in the passage of the <u>Enchiridion</u> previously quoted, where prayer for the faithful departed is variously seen as constituting 'thanksgiving', as 'being advantageous' to some, and as 'obtaining relief' for others, designations which presumably relate in some way to Augustine's 'categorization' of the state of the faithful departed into different conditions according to their need for remedial discipline. In each case, the effect of the prayer offered is seen as being commensurate with the gravity of sin, the degree of acquired merit and the severity of any purgatorial discipline incurred.

What is also interesting to note in this respect is the way in which Augustine allies the practice of almsgiving on behalf of the departed with that of prayer for the dead and the offering of the Eucharist, assigning to all three a similar, if not equal, efficacy. To quote the passage from the Enchiridion yet again: 'Nor is there room for denial that the souls of the deceased obtain relief through the dutiful service of their friends who are alive, when the Mediator's sacrifice is offered for them or almsgiving is done in the Church.'[210] It has already been noted in connection with the analysis of the penitential system that Augustine in keeping with his contemporaries accepted the theory of almsgiving as a stipulated price of forgiveness;[211] and thus, for example, in response to those who fell a second time into grave sin could enjoin them to adopt strict penances, to practice continence and to give alms to the poor, in the hope of eventually obtaining salvation. Within this framework of thought and with the extension of the penitential system into the after-life, it was but a matter of course for Augustine and other Western theologians to accord to almsgiving a continuing efficacy beyond the grave, together with that of prayer and eucharistic commemoration, promoting it as a justified vehicle for the expression of the bereaved person's love for the departed, and as an acceptable means to effect the remission of the sins of the departed and their increase in holiness. Although in medieval times this particular development in Western practice was to receive disproportionate emphasis - an inevitable consequence once it was loosened from the careful strictures of Augustinian thought - such later distortion should not be allowed to prejudice one's view of something which was, at least in its early stages, as much the product of good pastoral concern as of theological coherence. This fact will become increasingly apparent at a later stage in the discussion when attention will be directed to Augustine's reform of the popular cultus surrounding the veneration of the martyrs; and for this reason, further comment on this aspect of his thought will be suspended until then.

With regard to the general position of the martyrs in relation to Augustine's theology of prayer for the departed, it is apparent that just as the impious were considered to be outside the prayer of the church, Augustine limiting the efficacy of such prayer to the faithful departed, so similarly martyrs (and to a certain extent the greater saints)[212] were also thought by him to be beyond its bounds, or rather to be in no need of such prayer. It was Augustine's opinion that much in the same way as there were those whose manner of living was 'so established in evil as to be incapable of benefiting' from the prayers of the Church when they died, so equally, there were those who embraced 'a certain manner of living which is so established in goodness as to dispense with the need of them.'[213] And of those 'whose good deeds render such help unnecessary'[214] he set a special seal upon the martyrs, for whom he had a particular veneration. For example, when speaking of the liturgical commemoration of the martyrs, he is careful to argue the point that though they be commemorated at the altar in the intercessory prayers, it was not thought that the people prayed for them as such, as they might pray, say, for the ordinary dead whose names had been inscribed on the diptychs so that they might be read out and recalled to the mind of the community and recommended to their prayers.[215]

> At the altar (mensa) we do not think of them as we do of those others who rest in peace. We do not pray for them, but rather beg that they may pray for ourselves, so that we may follow in their footsteps; for they have that fulness of love of which the Lord has said that there cannot be a greater.[216]

Thanksgiving and invocation is the order of the day - not petition. Indeed, in one place Augustine even goes so far as to state that to pray for the martyrs would be an insult (iniuria) to their victory, especially when, as we have just seen, it is properly to their prayers and their intercessions that 'we ought to commend ourselves'.[217] He forwards similar opinions in a sermon given on the Feast-day of the martyrs Castus and AEmilius in which he expresses his belief that the martyrs plead the cause of the

living, vindicating their intercession from any supposed criticism that it denies the prerogative of the one 'Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous' - a charge not infrequently levied even today. He spoke as follows:

> The righteousness of the martyrs is perfect, for their very passion made them perfect. For this reason the prayers of the Church are not offered for them. For the rest of the faithful they are offered, not for martyrs, for they died so perfect that they are not our clients but our advocates. Neither are they this in themselves, but in him to whom they cleaved as perfect members to the head. For he is truly the one Advocate who intercedes for us, sitting at the right hand of the Father, but the one Advocate is also the one Shepherd ... as Christ was a Shepherd was not Peter a shepherd? Yes Peter also, and the rest like him, were undoubtedly shepherds.[218]

In all this Augustine is entirely in agreement with the convention of his day, reflecting the venerable tradition in Western theology to exclude the martyrs from the general intercession of the Church for the faithful departed and to accord them a pre-eminence in virtue of their acquired merit and selfless death through which they were deemed to have been perfected. This development in Western liturgy which has already been the cause of frequent comment, was of course theologically dependent on the related question of whether it was believed that the martyrs (and with them, the greatest saints) had already received their full reward or whether they too had to await the final consummation of the Last Day. The association of these issues casts Augustine's unambiguous stand on this matter in a strange light, for his opinion would not appear to be entirely in keeping with what has been seen elsewhere of the internal logic of his system which is not a little ambivalent on questions relating to the immediate reception of the martyrs into the fulness of joy and beautitude. Notions of possible unlimited growth in the after-life, of deepening in love through contemplation, would also seem to admit (at least in theory) the validity of continued petitionary prayer for the martyrs. But Augustine is quite adamant on the subject -

> They are not our clients but our defenders. We can do nothing for them except increase their joy by following their virtues.[219]

Augustine's uncompromising attitude on this question may perhaps be put down to liturgical convention. If not, one is left with one of two alternatives: either one accepts the presence of an unresolved inconsistency in his thought or one should seek to revise our initial estimate of his opinions on the state of the martyrs in the hereafter, which in hindsight might appear somewhat inadequate of the total evidence. Of the three explanations, I would venture to suggest the second as being the most probable.

With regard to the commendation of the faithful to the prayers of the saints (and more especially to those of the martyrs - since it is to them that Augustine repeatedly directs our attention) it is apparent even from the few quotations which have been given here that Augustine not only freely accepted this custom but also positively applauded it! He advocates its practice as yet another means open to the faithful for the increase in personal holiness. Not only is one benefited by their righteous prayers but one is also granted 'fellowship in their merits'[220] and thus stimulated to imitate their virtues. Once again we are presented with an argument which pivots around ideas of acquired merit and the established perfection of the martyrs - not that this fact necessarily precludes the continued acceptance of an earlier postulation that the practice of the invocation of the saints in prayer arose originally out of the simple interaction of exalted notions of martyrdom with a genuine understanding of the reciprocity of love and prayer that exists within the unity of all the faithful, living and departed. Indeed this basic understanding would seem to be established by the presence of precisely such sentiments in the thought of Augustine. They are not entirely absent even in contexts where he is specifically speaking of the habit and the utility of praying near the shrines of the martyrs, and of commending the souls of people in prayer to their special patronage.[221] One finds more personalized examples though in his <u>Confessions</u>, particularly in the

context of the moving tribute delivered to his friend Nebridius who had recently died, where he concludes by saying:

> Now he no longer puts his bodily ear to my lips, but the lips of his spirit to your fountain, drinking his fill of wisdom, all that his thirst requires, happy without end. Nor do I think he is so intoxicated with the draught of that wisdom as to forget me, since You, O Lord, of whom he drinks are mindful of us.[222]

Such intimacy in an understanding of the fellowship that unites living with departed, which I have more readily associated with the relatively undeveloped tradition of the East, does display the common inheritance and basis of all Christian theology in this area of thought, even if with our hindsight, it also testifies to the simpler insights of a passing era as far as Western spirituality is concerned.

Augustine's words here also bring to the fore an important assumption, as yet unconsidered, with regard to the whole utility of calling upon the faithful departed in prayer because if the removal of the saints from the intercessory prayer of the Church was a development in part associated with the belief that they had achieved their final reward, the invocation of the departed in prayer (be they martyrs, saints, friend or relative) represented a practice largely dependent on the assumption that they were in a position to hear the appeal of the living and to act upon it!

Augustine was aware of this problem and discusses the question thoroughly in his treatise De Cura pro mortuis gerenda where he in fact comes to the opinion that 'the spirits of the departed are where they do not see what is done and happens to men in this life.'[223] Nebridius is able to pray for Augustine and to be besought in prayer by him because he knows Augustine and is acquainted with his needs and failings. And Augustine further submits that although the dead do not know at any given moment what is occurring upon earth, they may come to be acquainted with events by those who pass to them at death. But Augustine stresses that the dead learn only what they are permitted to know, because it is good for them to know it. Similarly angels, whom Augustine

certainly views as being present in earthly concerns, may perhaps carry to the dead such intelligence as they may require. Again, things past, present or future may be made known to the dead where occasion demands it, by direct revelation of the Holy Spirit. And in this way Augustine can account for the fact - for he does not doubt that it is a fact - that the martyrs sometimes interpose when invoked in earthly affairs. Augustine may be agnostic about the way in which the commendation of people to the prayers of the martyrs operates but he never casts aspersions on its authenticity or effect.[224] He writes as follows:

> How the martyrs aid those whom undoubtedly they help, is a question which passes my powers of understanding: whether they are personally present at the same time in different and widely distant places, either at their shrines or independently of their shrines; or whether they abide sequestered from all converse with mortals in a place agreeable to their deserts, but yet praying generally for the needs of those in supplication (even as we pray for the dead, though we are not present with them, and do not know where they are or what they are doing), and Almighty God, who is everywhere present,... hearing the prayers of the martyrs, by means of the wide-spread ministry of the angels gives succour to the men for whom He judges it right in this poor life, and by his wonderful and unspeakable power and goodness commends the worthy deeds of his martyrs where, and when, and as He wills, but especially in connexion with their shrines, because He knows it to be expedient for us in building up the faith of Christ, for the confession of which they suffered. This is a matter too high for me to attain unto, and too abtruse for me to search out; and therefore which of these two accounts is the true one, or perhaps whether both are true, that sometimes these things are done by the actual presence of the martyrs, and sometimes by angels who personate the martyrs, I dare not decide, but would rather inquire of those who know.[225]

Once again the caution of the bishop in matters relating to the state of the departed becomes apparent. But his theological reticence on these particular issues does not dissolve either his confidence about the life after death or his particular veneration for the martyrs. Both remain constant. As to any further questions that might be levelled against the latter, they may best be answered by reference to Augustine himself, who when writing against

Faustus the Manichee[226] placed the whole issue in its proper perspective and incidentally provided us with a definitive statement on the teaching of the fourth century Church, which may serve appropriately enough for our concluding remarks on this matter:

> The Christian people throng the memorials of the martyrs with religious solemnity, to stimulate the imitation of them, to obtain fellowship in their merits, and to be helped by their prayers; but we erect no altars to any of the martyrs, but to the martyrs' God, though in the martyrs' memorials. What bishop, standing at the altar in the places where their holy bodies are buried, ever said, 'We offer to thee, O Peter, or O Paul, or O Cyprian'? What is offered is offered to God who crowned the martyrs .... We attend upon the martyrs with the same attentions of love and fellowship as we attend upon holy men of God in this life, whose hearts we feel to be ready to endure the same suffering for the truth of the Gospel .... But the worship which implies a service proper to the divine nature, we neither pay nor teach men to pay to any save to God alone.[227]

All this appears convincing in its consistency and coherence, and can as such commend itself for our acceptance as an adequate reflection of the mind of the Church. Augustine's polemical tone, however, does betray the presence of another resonance in the voice of the fourth century church, one as yet only briefly acknowledged. If his opinions be taken as authoritative expressions of the current ecclesiastical thought and practice, they should not be credited with universal or unconditional acceptance. For it is apparent both from Augustine's writings and from available archaeological evidence, that the custom of the veneration of the martyrs, whilst undoubtedly a justifiable ecclesiastical tradition, was not without its pious accretions and excesses, certainly in the province of North Africa. The foundation of churches and the rapid multiplication of memorial chapels - memoriae - over the graves of martyrs[228] (which meant that these buildings were usually situated in the cemetry outside a town), the unrestricted invocation of martyrs with regard to all manner of spiritual and temporal needs,[229] either by simple prayer or by pilgrimage to their memorial chapels, or even by the purchase of a grave near to a sacred vault,[230] and the growth in the cult of relics,[231] all serve in differing ways to testify to the variety and intensity of popular devotion to the martyrs. Of all

the various practices, perhaps the most notorious was that associated with the feasting at the tombs of the dead. It was certainly the custom that caused Augustine the greatest concern and which provoked him into implementing its reform.

Liturgically speaking, the usual commemoration of a martyr was in fact nothing but the customary and common anniversay of the dead, with the exception that it was held with greater solemnity.[232] It was distinguished only by the greater part which the community played in it and by its more permanent character, in the sense that because it was the concern of the whole ecclesiastical community it did not cease with the death of the martyr's immediate relatives and friends. But just as it was common custom in Africa to visit regularly and adorn the graves of departed members of one's family or friends, and to banquet there, so similarly, it became common practice for the Christian community to honour its elected heroes, the martyrs, in similar fashion. The cult of the martyrs in its extra-liturgical manifestations thus represented a particular expression of the cult of the dead, and as such it reaped both its advantages and disadvantages. One of the disadvantages was that it enjoyed extraordinary popularity; one of its disadvantages was that nowhere did innovations meet with greater opposition. People considered the cult of the martyrs, like that of the dead, as more or less their own business, a matter of private devotion which, like the domestic cult, did not belong to the jurisdiction of the clergy - an opinion fervently held in the more insular regions of the province.[233] In fact to this day many primitive customs continue to be maintained relatively unchanged in Africa,[234] a fact which only serves to confirm the premise that we are dealing not so much with specifically Christian conventions, as with traditional Berber folk piety which has successfully survived attempts at Christian baptism and Islanic proselytization. As Johannes Quasten points out,[235] it was certainly a 'masterpiece of accommodation' on the part of the early church that whilst retaining something of the framework of pagan funerary convention, she should have been able to transform it by injecting her own understanding of death and of the state of the departed, even to the

point of substituting the eucharist for the pagan sacrifice for the dead.[236] This early success he considers to be part of the reason behind the initial toleration which was now shown to the cult of the refrigeria or funeral repasts, which of course, proved to be more resistant to either reform or 'accommodation'.

As has already been intimated, the refrigerium was an ancient practice of long standing which involved the holding of a meal on various occasions by the grave of the deceased (especially on the anniversary of the death) and at which the deceased himself was deemed present, a place being set for him and a portion of the meal put aside.[237] In the evening, for the meal usually took place in the evening, the family called the dead man's name and invited him to partake of the offering and to join them in eating and sacrifice. At Rome and elsewhere pagan burial places have been found with little holes in the floor and a pipe leading down to the corpse through which drink was poured. In Africa itself, there is the now famous tomb of the Donatist bishop Optatus.[238] Apparently the custom of death-meals could be practised in some Christian circles with equal ferocity![239] Such aberrations aside, it would still be true to say that even the original idea of the custom was entirely contrary to Christian opinion if only because it represented the dead as still being subject to the earthly necessities of food and drink. Quasten, however, is of the opinion that by the end of classical antiquity, the practice was 'little more than an expression of communion with the dead', and therefore could easily act as a vehicle for Christian sentiments if suitably spiritualized.[240] Indeed it was a custom which was followed in the best Christian families as Augustine himself bears witness in his account of his mother's visit to the martyrs' tombs in Milan, taking as she did, offerings of food and wine - 'as was the custom in Africa'.[241]

In theory then, the refrigerium of the dead constituted a sort of cult act which in the case of the martyrs was motivated out of veneration for their victory. In reality, however, the

practice admitted gross abuses. The meals were held not only in the open near the graves of the dead, but in the very basilicas of the martyrs, like a divine service, and these often became occasions for excessive drinking parties. This was the case, for example, in the Basilica of St. Cyprian in Carthage at the time when Augustine was Bishop of Hippo.[242] Similarly, in his own diocese, the feast of St. Leontius, the martyr bishop of Hippo, was regularly a flagrant excuse for gluttony and drunkeness.[243] Such excesses were apparently not unusual and they consequently warranted strict censure.

In Milan, St. Ambrose had already attempted and succeeded in implementing a severe reform of the cult to the point of abolition, and it was his action which Monica unwittingly contravened in attending the martyrs' shrines. From Augustine's account of the incident it would appear that Ambrose was promulgating two reasons in support of his prohibition.[244] On the one hand, Ambrose considered that the feasts supposedly in honour of the dead, were in fact merely providing people with an excuse for drunkeness. On the other hand, it was his opinion that such festivals bore too close a resemblance to pagan custom, being really a sort of parentalia. Ambrose's reasoning is interesting and the order of his objections may not be accidental.[245]

But if Ambrose pioneered a sweeping reform of the cult in Northern Italy, the delicate situation in which Augustine later found himself in Africa demanded a more subtle approach and accordingly Augustine in conjunction with his fellow bishops, advocated a via media, counselling moderation rather than abolition. Faced with a lively popular devotion, Augustine saw his episcopal function as being, in the words of Van der Meer, 'to restrain rather than to incite'.[246] The chronology and circumstances of the African reform are of no importance to this discussion and are, in any case, more adequately dealt with elsewhere.[247] It is sufficient to note that Augustine is always careful to differentiate the true veneration of the martyrs from the corrupt cult of the dead, arguing for a distinction to be made between the traditional pietas and the various

degenerations of that sentiment that had recently manifested themselves.[248] He suggests, for example, that the placing of food and drink on graves should be permitted, providing moderation is observed and that the act be regarded as a form of almsgiving for the poor. This he connects with the idea of solace for the dead. For as was noted earlier, almsgiving, like the offering of the eucharist and prayer for the departed, were all considered by Augustine to be efficacious. He writes as follows:

> However these drunken revels and luxurious feasts in the cemetries are wont to be regarded by the ignorant and carnal multitude as not only an honour for the martyrs but also a solace for the dead. Therefore it appears to me that they might be more easily dissuaded from such scandalous and unworthy practices in these places if, besides showing that they were forbidden by Scripture, we take care in regard to the offerings for the spirits of those who sleep, that these offerings be not sumptuous beyond what is becoming to the memory of the departed, especially because we are bound to believe them to be of some use; and also, that they be distributed without ostentation and cheerfully to all who ask and share of them, and that they be not sold, but that if anyone desires to offer any money as a religious act, it be given on the spot to the poor. Thus the appearance of neglecting the memory of their deceased friends, which might cause them no small sorrow of heart, shall be avoided, and that which is a pious and honourable act of religious service shall be celebrated as it should be in the church.[249]

From this one can see that Augustine's action was not simply a matter of pastoral expediency. His pragmatism was, as always, conditioned by his theological presuppositions.

It will already be apparent that the implication behind the cult of feasting at the tombs of the dead (though not behind Augustine's censure of it) and the implication behind many of the other customs previously mentioned, and particularly that of purchasing a grave near a sacred vault, was that the dead person whether martyr or relative, was somehow 'present' in an almost localized way. This fact is significant because as A.D. Nock has pointed out[250] throughout the history of man's conduct in the face of the mystery of

death there ~~has~~ have run two competing strands: - on the one hand, there is the possibility that the dead person or some part or aspect or transformation of him may pass to a new dimension of spiritual existence, may enjoy new happiness or face new dangers; the happiness and the dangers are, of course, thought of in terms of earthly experience, but as subsisting under quite different conditions. On the other hand, there is the fact that the dead man's remains, whether buried, or burned or exposed, are actually localized in a particular spot. Hence that place retains an importance even when (as in Christianity) it is dogmatically held that the essential element in the deceased person is 'elsewhere' - if spatial terminology may be used in this context. In such cases the belief in the practical necessity of funerary rites would be strong, the dead man being conceived of as an animated corpse, with natural needs and natural vindictiveness; and he may remain so even in enlightened communities, in the eys of many of the less educated and therefore be thought to require placating. Furthermore, even when this has faded, the grave will still remain important because as Nock indicates, it was the place at which the living took leave of the dead man. Consequently, it is at the graveside that his memory can most appropriately be honoured and this desire for honour may remain strong, even after any idea of benefiting the dead man by tendance has disappeared.

Apart from providing some deeper illumination into the basic mechanics and purpose of the rituals and customs under discussion, Nock's analysis is important for the further insight it gives into the reality of life in the church at the turn of the fourth century. Consideration has already been given to some of the consequences of the Constantinian Peace, but none was greater than the great mass-movement of people from all classes that occurred towards Christianity. For among the new converts were not only people of a deeply religious nature, but also those of a more mixed disposition, and unfortunately, those who now found it advantageous to be a Christian. The influence of pagan thought and practice upon the Christian faith has been the cause of intermittant comment in the

course of this study. Such influence was anticipated and inevitable because of the life of the church as with any other institution, ethnic or idelogical grouping, is determined at least in part, by the people living within its bounds and by those who profess allegiance, however nominally. Even so, such influence that there was in earlier years must have been small compared with the renewed and intensified pressure which the church now experienced as it tried to cope with the sudden influx of the pagan masses with their own customs and rituals. For whatever the subtleties and safeguards the episcopate may have encouraged, the numerous uneducated and spiritually impoverished proletariat continued to embrace superstition as well as their newly-acquired faith. And as Prof. E. R. Dodds put it:

> A new belief-pattern very seldom effaces completely the pattern that was there before: either the old lives on as an element in the new - sometimes as an unconfessed or half-conscious element - or else the two persist side-by-side, logically incompatible, but contemporaneously accepted by different individuals or even by the same individual. [251]

This was the true reality of the situation in the year 430, the year of St. Augustine's death. Augustine for his part, as has been seen, bequeathed to the Church a co-ordinated theological map-work of probabilities about life after death, in which various avenues of thought about the state of the faithful departed, the nature and purpose of any purgative suffering, the efficacy and expediency of prayer for the dead, had been explored and evaluated in the quest for a deeper understanding of the realities to which they claimed to refer. But the age of St. Augustine clearly bequeathed something more to its succeeding generations beside theological coherence. The inheritance it yielded was a more amorphous body of thought and practices which in time was to develop into an ~~rigid~~ extensive popular piety. In the years that followed Augustine's death are to be seen the beginnings of this development and the marks of transition which finally led out of the patristic age and into that of the Medieval.

d) FROM AUGUSTINE TO GREGORY

The years following the death of Augustine saw the gradual collation and systematisation of much of the doctrinal formulation of the preceeding centuries, and the laying of the foundations for later theological constructions. After nearly a century of controversy following his death, the Synod of Orange in 529 codified (and in so doing modified) Augustine's thought on the theology of grace, predestination and freewill in a form that was to prove acceptable to Western theology. Similarly, the second Council of Constantinople in 553, after a long period of controversy following the Council of Chalcedon in 451 undertook to define the teachings of the Fathers and the decrees of the councils as the standard for the teaching of the entire Church, but especially for Eastern theology. In so doing, both East and West articulated a broad orthodox consensus about what was to be considered as normative in the Christian tradition.

Fundamental to this orthodox consensus was an affirmation of the authority of tradition itself as that which had been believed 'everywhere, always, by all' (ubique, semper, ab omnibus).[252] In other words the criteria established for discerning the content of orthodoxy, for distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate doctrinal development,[253] were universality, antiquity and consensus.

The criterion of universality required that a doctrine, if it was to be recognised as the official teaching of the Church and to be promulgated as such, (as opposed to a private theory or academic postulation), had to be genuinely catholic; that is, in the words of Jerome, to be the confession of 'all the churches .... one great horde of people from Palestine to Chalcedon with one voice re-echoing the praises of Christ.'[254] Catholicity was a mark of true doctrine as it was of the true church, for ecclesiology and dogmatic formulation were considered to be integrally related. As Gregory the Great was to put it, 'The churches, although many,

make up one Catholic Church, diffused throughout the world.'[255] And to identify orthodox doctrine one had to identify its locus which was the Catholic Church, neither Greek nor Latin, neither Eastern nor Western, but universal throughout the civilised world (οἰκουμένη). However, as Jaroslav Pelikan points out,[256] it was fundamental to the credibility of this definition of authority that there be a universality in time as well as universality in space, hence the adherence to the further criterion of antiquity as an essential component of tradition. Not that the norm of antiquity was thought to effect the automatic elevation to authoritative status of every theologian of the past, regardless of what he had taught. Then as now, some teachers were to be preferred to others, some formulations were to be approved rather than others. Or as Pelikan roundly has it: 'There was ancient heresy as well as ancient orthodoxy.'[257] With this in mind it was contended that any teaching was to be condemned despite its antiquity, if it deviated from what had always been taught by the true succession of orthodox bishops and theologians. From this contention emerged the third norm of orthodox tradition, that of consensus. In a passage written in opposition to the Manichees Augustine had embroidered the authority of the episcopate with a reference to 'the consensus of so many nations.'[258] This had been taken up by Vincent of Lérins in 434 and incorporated into his thinking though with the condition that 'in antiquity itself we adhere to the consensus of the definitions and determinations of all - or at least of almost all - priests and doctors.'[259]

It would be an exaggeration to claim from this, as Pelikan once again points out, that the church of the fifth or sixth centuries had come to envisage authority, or to be more precise, the concept of consensus, as an exclusively clerical prerogative. Undoubtedly the development of catholic orthodoxy was closely associated with the rise of papal hegemony, at least in the West, but as yet this had not abrogated the rôle of the people in the articulation of doctrine. Reference to the influence of the church's worship upon doctrinal formulation has repeatedly been

made during this study because quite often it is in the context of Christian devotion that the key to the genesis of a particular belief or controversy is to be located. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the doctrinal authenticity of ordinary Christian devotion and liturgy was readily admitted and when the doctors of the church were faced with the relative silence of earlier generations of theologians on some issue, recourse had to be made to the silent but praying people of God. Here the 'all' of the praying church were to be given precedence over what might appear to be the consensus of the church's theologians, continuity, if not identity, being ascribed to the worshipping community. In the words of the now-famous axiom of Prosper, 'the rule of prayer should lay down the rule of faith' (ut legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi).[260] So was formulated a further principle for discerning the true orthodox tradition, one which gave cohesion and support to the rest.

In this brief account of the accepted rational and cognitive norms for Christian thinking in the sixth century no attempt has been made or will be made to offer a critique of either the appropriateness or the viability of its methodological codification. The sole purpose envisaged is one of illumination. It is intended to provide an insight not only into the new theological rationale of the age but also into the context of the gradual but profound changes that had occurred in theology about life after death during the hundred years following the death of Augustine. For throughout the writings of Gregory the Great (and with him those whom he typifies) there is to be found a new atmosphere of definiteness and definitiveness. Doctrines relating to the state of the departed and the efficacy of praying for the dead, like so many others, are to be found influenced with a hitherto unknown dogmatic imperative - things that 'have to be believed'. Where before was only probability is now to be discerned absolute certainty.

Of Gregory the Great (540 - 604) it is unjust to say that 'almost everything in him has its roots in Augustine and yet

almost nothing is genuinely Augustinian.'[261] Nevertheless his theology does constitute little more than a popularization of that of Augustine which he presented in a form that was to remain current throughout the early Middle Ages, with the result that, as was noted above, the staple theology of the West for the next few centuries was to be largely diluted Augustinianism. In his thought about life after death it is clear that Gregory adopted Augustine's theological framework at almost every point. It will not be thought necessary to repeat what has already been described elsewhere. In matters of detail, however, Gregory is markedly different; for as has just been stated, whereas Augustine was content to speak in terms of distinct possibility, Gregory (to borrow a phrase of B. J. Kidd) 'erected the speculation into a certainty.'[262]

For example, what had been suggestions about the possibility of some sort of purgation after death, what had been tentative references to a purgatorial fire, appear in Gregory as 'something that has to be believed' (credendus est). 'I should like to be taught,' says the disciple in Gregory's Dialogues, 'whether we are to believe that there is a purgatorial fire after death.' This was evidently a matter of some conjecture or at least, of interesting inquiry. Gregory's reply betrays no sign of doubt however. He begins by warning his disciple that there can be no fundamental change of heart after this present life - as a man dies so is he at the Last Judgement - but goes on to say 'yet for some slight sins we should believe that there is before the judgement a purgatorial fire.'[263] And then commenting on the text I Cor. 3 : 12, says:

> Although it is possible to understand this text of the application to us of the fire of tribulation in this life, yet if any one should take it of the fire of a purgation to come, it must be carefully remembered that he only is said to be capable of salvation by fire .... who builds upon this foundation ..... wood, hay, stubble; that is, very slight and inconsiderable sins, which the fire can easily consume. But observe that no man will obtain there any purgation of even slight sins, unless in this life he has deserved to obtain it by good actions.[264]

For all Gregory's careful qualifications, the unmistakable foundation of the Medieval doctrine of Purgatory is apparent in all he says. Apart from its obvious dogmatic standpoint, Gregory's reply reflects the ordering of a penitential system which differentiates mortal from venial sin, and which sanctions its association with a theology of merit.[265] The conjunction of these two themes provides the contours for his theological articulation. The criterion for ultimate vindication is not simply one of faith but rather one of acquired sanctity: An inevitable development when one considers that the theology of the church in this era was not generated within the confines of a well-defined Christian community and an exterior pagan world, the saved and the impious, or even within the context of a slightly more ambiguously defined community of faith in which certain shades of grey were embraced, but rather within the orbit of an established Christianized society in which the 'faith' of an individual was the presupposition of its pronouncements which in turn were directed to a wider clientel~~le~~ whose appropriation of the fulness of the Christian faith was acknowledged to be spurious. Thus, in the words of Homes Dudden, it could follow that

> Just as penance itself was a supplement to baptism, and offered a second chance of salvation to the fallen, so the pains of purgatory were now made to supplement earthly penances. An additional hope of making satisfaction was held out to man. Hell was removed one stage further away, and yet one more consolation and encouragement was offered to the penitent.[266]

On a more subtle note, Gregory's use of scripture should also be noted for it betrays the changed attitude of the Church towards statements about life after death. At one level, his acknowledgement of the above Pauline text is interesting because in spite of its exegetical impropriety it is one which will be offered repeatedly by medieval theologians in justification of the doctrine of Purgatory. At another level and more importantly, his use of the text bears testimony to a changing methodology. For with the acceptance of a doctrine of Purgatory into the dogmatic scheme of the church, the rôle of Scripture naturally

became confirmatory, confirmatory of a doctrinal position which in this case represented a particular development within a set of theological propositions about the nature of the Christian life and its fulfilment after death, which was originally adopted or rather advocated, for quite other reasons than adherence to the insights of Scripture. In saying this, it is not meant to deny the possible compatibility of Scripture with this development, nor to suggest that Gregory's writing in this field presents an entirely new departure in Biblical scholarship, nor even to undermine the significance and value of such a procedure. The point is more general, and that is to note a methodological corollary of a change in doctrinal status, and with Maurice Wiles to realise that 'the ability to find apparently precise and detailed confirmation of one's own convictions in the exact wording of Scripture was not the insincere or artificial production of an additional weapon for use against one's enemies; it was a genuine and psychologically important reinforcement of one's own beliefs.'[267]

In addition to sanctioning the doctrine of a purgatorial fire Gregory also elevated to dogmatic status the practice of offering prayer for the faithful departed, both privately and liturgically. With the exception of Aerius whose opposition to the practice had been outright, no record or evidence of any dissent on this matter is to be found. It was certainly the opinion of Augustine, for example, that prayer for the dead constituted a practice which had been universally acknowledged from the first and in that confidence Augustine could vest his opposition to Aerius - *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Whatever the truth of his judgement (and certainly evidence can be drawn in support of such an idealization) it is clear that Gregory was in one sense, doing nothing more than officially promulgating something which had been maintained from the first. Even so, his whole approach to the subject manages to impart of fresh imperative to the doctrine. According to Gregory, 'it has to be believed' (*credendum est*) that the prayers of the faithful avail in obtaining mitigation and

ultimately release from the purgatorial fire for those of the departed who sinned 'not out of malice but out of the error of ignorance.'[268] Furthermore, just as he is prepared to propound the view that the privation of the vision of God is itself one of the purgatorial pains, so he is also given to assert that the dead who must suffer such anguish, do so because they are 'somewhat deficient in righteousness.'[269] The movement towards perfection and the attainment of the beatific vision are thus correlated to the acquisition of righteousness in the mind of Gregory, all of which however, can be secured with the aid of the intercession of the departed saints in heaven and the faithful here upon earth. Commenting on Job 14 : 21, he says with no modest uncertainty -

> As those who are still alive do not know where the souls of the dead are kept, so the dead are not aware in what manner the life of those who live after them in the flesh is disposed; because the life of the spirit is far from the life of the flesh, and as bodily and unbodily things are different in kind, so they are apprehended differently. But this must not be supposed to be the case with the souls of the saints; they inwardly see the brightness of Almighty God, and therefore we cannot believe that they are ignorant of anything.[270]

Here Gregory would seem to attribute a virtual omniscience to the saints: an opinion he is at liberty to adopt because of his belief in their full possession of the beatific vision. The knowledge of the saints of the supplications of the living is derived from their vision of the 'brightness of Almighty God' - they see everything reflected, as it were, in the mind of God - and that vision is the just reward they receive for their labours. With such presuppositions one can understand why Gregory is all the more ready to treat the invocation of the saints as an undisputed and thoroughly established principle of Christianity, and why he endeavours to quicken the zeal of his people for the custom by fervent appeals such as that delivered on the festival of Saint Processus and Saint Martinian. He exclaims as follows -

> Make these saints, beloved, your patrons in your trial before the severe Judge; take these as your defenders in the day of the awful terror. If you had any case to be discussed tomorrow before some great judge, surely you would spend the whole day in thinking about it, you would seek some patron, you would earnestly entreat him to defend you before so great a judge. Behold, the severe Judge, Jesus, is coming! There is before us the terror of that mighty assembly of angels and archangels. In that assembly our case will be tried. And yet we are not looking out for patrons to defend us. But the tidy martyrs are here ready to be our defenders. They wish to be asked; I may say, they beg us to beg of them. Seek then, these to support your prayer; fly to these to protect you in your guilt; for the Judge Himself wills to be entreated that He may not punish sinners.[271]

The sentiments expressed in this passage, the emphasis on punishment, the portrayal of Jesus as the 'severe Judge' and the placatory role of the saints, require no comment. Their very presence is sufficient testimony to the changed theological outlook of the church. Their combined effect is declaratory of the incipient gloom of Medieval Purgatory.[272]

Within the scheme of intercession for the departed Gregory also gives special place to the eucharist. The liturgy and theology of the church had long since associated the eucharist with the commemoration of the faithful departed and frequently had recourse to expound this in sacrificial language, whereby the eucharist was understood as being in some sense a representation of and participation in the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. With Gregory this sacrificial terminology receives definiteness and detailed exposition.

> The Sacrifice of the holy altar when offered with tears and kindliness of heart, contributes peculiarly to our absolution. For He who in Himself being risen from the dead, dieth no more, still through this Sacrifice in his own mystery suffers again for us. For as often as we offer Him the Sacrifice of his passion, so do we renew to ourselves his passion for our absolution.[273]

In this way the sacrifice of the mass is interpreted as being a

particularly efficacious form of intercession, and so speaking of life after death Gregory can assert that

> If guilty deeds are not beyond absolution even after death, the sacred offering of the saving Victim consistently aids souls even after death, so that the very souls of the departed seem sometimes to yearn for this.[274]

Here, of course, Gregory refers only to souls in Purgatory since they alone merit the aid of the holy sacrifice and are in need of its saving help.[275]

In the Dialogues one finds Gregory illustrating the various aspects of his teaching on purgatory with a number of curious stories and visions. Although reference will be made here to but three of these stories, they are intended to be representative and they should prove to be sufficient illustration of an important aspect of Gregory's approach to this subject. In one place, for example, he relates the story of Paschasius,[276] a deacon of Rome, who had been a vehement opponent of Symmachus at the time of his election to the Roman see. Paschasius was a good and upright man who was acclaimed for his charity. However, some time after his death, Gregory records how Germanus, having been ordered a course of hot baths, on entering the bath-house had a vision of Pascharius standing in fire. Germanus ascertained from Paschasius the reason for his presence, and discovered that it was the result of his opposition to Symmachus, whereupon Paschasius besought Germanus to pray for him to be relieved of his suffering. He would know that his prayer had been answered if he did not find him there at his next visit. Gregory prayed earnestly for Paschasius and apparently when he next entered the baths the terrible vision no longer troubled him. Paschasius it is to be noted sinned through ignorance, not malice, and ~~on that account as well as through the prayers~~ of Germanus in view of this and his own good deeds were effective in obtaining his release from Purgatory. ~~and in virtue of his own good deeds, Gregory accords his release from Purgatory.~~

In a similar way Gregory provides various anecdotes and

stories which he deems important evidence for the value of the holy sacrifice in releasing a soul from punishment after death. For example, in one case which Gregory cites, a presbyter was served for several days in the baths by an unknown attendant, to whom he took as reward some of the bread used for the eucharist. The servant, however, refused the gift and declared himself to be the former master of the baths condemned for his faults to servitude after death. He begged the presbyter instead to offer the bread in the Sacrifice for his sins, and when he returned to the baths he would no more find him there. This story[277] would seem to envisage the purgation after death being accomplished on earth, unless one is to interpret the 'ghost' as symbolic of his trials in purgatory. Alternatively Gregory would seem to be creduously accepting some popular belief that souls are sent back to earth for punishment.

In another instance Gregory narrates the story of a monk of his own monastery of St. Andrew who was liberated from purgatory after masses had been offered for his repose for thirty consecutive days.[278] Apparently his fellow monks lost count of the days and while they were anxiously considering whether they were fulfilled, the dead monk's brother arrived to tell them that he had had a vision of his brother announcing that all was now well with him. From this they knew that their masses had secured his release from punishment.

Visions of the Hereafter have been described previously and in large measure they were found to correspond to the teachings of the theologians of their day, though they unquestionably gave more dramatic expression to the general beliefs about the destiny of human souls after death, offering detailed information as to the various states or places of bliss and of torment. In this respect they were tangential to the official teaching of the church, but nonetheless significant for that. They brought into focus an important facet of the diffuse pattern of Christian belief about life after death and the descriptive element they employed, whatever the extent to which it was intended or taken literally, served to arouse appropriate emotions and attitudes. It was

assumed that, whether heaven or purgatory or hell corresponded to the imagery used or not, the feelings aroused by the imagery would still be the right ones should the realities they signified be experienced.

The visions of purgatory narrated by Gregory for all their restrained language would appear to be remarkably similar in outlook to those of earlier generations. But their significance does not subsist solely in similarity of style or content. Once again, it is their presence which is the important thing, their presence as an integral part of Gregory's teaching, as an acceptable and accepted commodity in theological discourse. Doubtless one would wish to question the felicity of a theological procedure which more or less freely utilises the 'miraculous' and testimonies of visionary experience as sources and confirmation of official Christian teaching. Gregory's use of the material certainly has all the appearance of simplicity.[279] It would be a crude deduction, however, to equate simplicity with naiveté. Gregory was a man of his time, sharing the assumptions and credulity of his age. He recorded what he believed to be true. People believed they had witnessed these events, and they told Gregory what they believed had happened; there is no question of falsehood. (Not that this disposes of the question of historicity). Nevertheless, the significance of the vision/miracle lay for Gregory primarily in its interpretation. In a scientific age with our notion of causation and with our preoccupation with the demands of empiricism, the central question about such events is 'how?'. For Gregory, however, it was not the mechanics of a vision that mattered but its significance. The question was 'why?'. Benedicta Ward, writing of Bede, has said that his 'world was shot through with divinity, and a miracle was not just any inexplicable event but an event that was also a sign of God's relationship with man.'[280] Her remarks are not inapplicable to Gregory. The events Gregory describes are integral to his understanding of the purpose of life and they reflect his deepest convictions about the dealings of God with man. That is why they inevitably find a place in his theology.

In so doing he prefigured a whole trend in medieval theology, but this was established at the expense of also providing a mask of respectability for a widespread undergrowth in Christian piety where ampler visions of purgatory were commonplace, and the power of the holy sacrifice achieved near-magical proportions.

Pope Gregory the Great died in the year 604, but it was not until the Council of Florence in the year 1439 that the Catholic Church finally formulated the dogma of purgatory. The East for its part, never officially accepted the doctrine, in spite of the temporary and partial adherence of its delegates at the Council. Beyond Florence and the abuses of purgatory lay the violent denunciations of the Reformers; and beyond them the declarations of the Council of Trent. As of yet however, all this was future history, unforseen, unpredictable. Even so there can be no doubt that it was the pre-eminence of Gregory as a theologian and ecclesiastic that gave the great impetus to the medieval doctrine and which ultimately contributed to its conciliar definition; for it was the combination of Augustinianism with the conceptions of popular religion effected at his hands that was to prove so acceptable to medieval churchmen.

CHAPTER 5

FOOTNOTES

1 In the following quotations from Cyprian's epistles I shall be following the numeration given by Hartel, CSEL III (ii).

2 See Chapter 3, note 82 ; see also Edelhard L. Hummel, The Concept of Martyrdom according to St. Cyprian of Carthage, (The Catholic University of America, Studies in Christian Antiquity, No.9), Washington D.C., 1946.

3 Deus quantum patris pietate indulgens semper et bonus est, tantum iudicis maiestate metuendus est. Quam magna deliquimus, tam granditer defleamus. Alto uulneri diligens et longa medicina non desit, paenitentia crimine minor non sit. (De Lapsis, 35)

4 Epistle LV. When Antonianus, having received letters from Novatian, had begun to be disposed in his mind towards his party, Cyprian confirms him in his former opinion, namely, that of continuing to hold communion with Cornelius. That he may induce him to this, he narrates the history of the whole disturbance between Cornelius and Novatian, and explains that Cornelius was an excellent man and legitimately elected Bishop; while Novatian had obtained an unlawful election. Moreover, by the way, Cyprian excuses himself for advocating a different approach in respect of the lapsed ~~when~~ than he had previously been putting forward against Novatus, and explains his reasons and the errors of Novatian's opinion.

5 Nec putes, frater charissime, hinc aut virtutem fratrum minui aut martyria deficere quod lapsis laxata sit poenitentia, et quod poenifentibus spec pacis oblata. Manet vere fidentium robur immobile, et apud timentes ac diligentes corde toto Deum stabilis et fortis perseverat integritas .... Nam aliud est ad veniam stare, aliud ad gloriam pervenire, aliud missum in carcerem non exire inde donec solvat novissimum quadrantem, aliud statim fidei et virtutis accipere mercedem, aliud pro peccatis longo dolore cruciatum emundari et purgari diu igne, aliud peccata omnia passione purgasse, aliud denique pendere in diem iudicii ad sententiam Domini, aliud statim a Domino coronari. (Ep.LV 20; CSEL III (ii) 638).

6 R.E. Hutton, The Soul in the Unseen World, London 1901, p.241.

7 On Tertullian's understanding of the place of the martyrs in the after-life, see Chapter 3 p.86f.

8 Quanta est dignitas et quanto securitas exire hinc laetum, exire inter pressuras et angustias gloriosum; claudere in

momento oculos, quibus homines videbantur et mundus, et reperire eosdem statim ut Deus, videatur et Christus ... Sine damno temporis merces, iudice Deo, redditur. (Ad Fortunatum de exhortatione Martyrii XIII; CC, III 215).

9 in carcere beati fratres nostri ad immortalitatem gloriosae mortis exitu transeunt, et celebrentur hic a nobis oblationes et sacrificia ob commemorationes eorum (Ep., XII, 2; CSEL., III (ii) 503).

10 Sacrificio pro eis semper, ut meministis, offerimus quoties martyrum passiones et dies anniversaria commemoratione celebramus. (Ep., XXXIX. 3; CSEL III (ii) 583.)

11 eg., Ep. XI 3, 7; De Oratione 8, 23; De Unitate 12.

12 Memores nostri invicem simus concordes atque unanimes: utrobique pro nobis semper oremus, pressuras et angustias mutua caritate relevemus, et quis istinc nostrum prior Divinae dignationis celeritate praecesserit, perseveret apud Dominum nostra dilectio pro fratribus et sororibus nostris, apud misericordiam Patris non cesset oratio. (Ep. LX; CSEL III (ii) 695).

13 Some scholars have contended that the notion of private devotions is completely anachronistic, and that Christians of this period, contrary to the tendency of modern individualism, knew no other, or scarcely any other, form of prayer other than liturgical prayer. For a discussion of this view see chapter nine ('Daily Devotions of the Early Christians') of J.A. Jungmann, The Early Liturgy ET., London 1960. See also, Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition (on private prayer). Certainly by the time of Augustine, as we see from his Confessions 'personal prayer' as distinct from 'private liturgical prayer' must have been common. Hence the prayer on his mother's death (Conf.IX 13).

14 non offerretur pro eo, nec sacrificium pro dormitione eius celebraretur. Neque enim apud altare Dei meretur nominari in sacerdotum prece qui ob altari sacerdotes et ministros voluit avocare. (Ep. I 2; CSEL III (ii) 466.)

15 Et ideo Victor, cum, contra formam nuper in concilio a sacerdotibus datam, Geminium Faustinum presbyterum ausus sit tutorem constituere, non est quod pro dormitione eius apud vos fiat oblatio, aut deprecatio aliqua nomine eius in Ecclesia frequentetur, ut sacerdotum decretum religiose et necessarie factum servetur a nobis, simul et caeteris fratribus detur exemplum ne quis sacerdotes et ministros Dei altari eius et Ecclesiae vacantes ad saecularcs molestias devocet. (Ep. i. 2; ibid.)

16 Cur immaniter conventicula [meruerunt] dirui? in quibus summus oratur Deus, pax cunctis et venia postulatur, magistratibus,

exercitibus, regibus, familiaribus, inimicis, adhuc vitam degentibus et resolutis corporum victione. (Adversus Gentes IV;36; CSEL, IV 171.)

17 Divinae Institutiones VII 20, 21.

18 Nec tamen universi tunc a Deo iudicabuntur: sed ii tantum qui sunt in Dei religione versati. Nam qui Deum non agnoverunt, quoniam sententia de his in absolutionem ferri non potest, iam iudicati damnatique sunt, sanctis litteris contestantibus, non ressurecturos esse impios in iudicium. Iudicabuntur ergo qui Deum scierunt, et facinora eorum, id est mala opera cum bonis collata ponderabuntur; ut si plure et gravia fuerint bona iustaque, dentur ad vitam beatam: si autem mala superaverint, condemnentur ad poenam. (Divinae Institutiones VII 20; PL.VI 799.)

19 Sed et iustos cum iudicaverit, etiam in igni eos examinabit. Tum quorum peccata vel pondere, vel numero praevaluerint, perstringentur igni atque amburentur: quos autem plena iustitia et maturitas virtutis incoxerit, ignem illum non sentient; habent enim aliquid in se Dei, quod vim flammae repellat, ac respuat. Tanta vis est innocentiae, ut ab ea ignis ille refugiat innoxius; qui accepit a Deo hanc potentiam, ut impios urat, iustis obtemperet. Nec tamen quisquam putet animas post mortem protinus judicari. Nam omnes in una communique custodia detinentur, donec tempus adveniat, quo maximus iudex meritorum faciat examen. Tum quorum fuerit probata iustitia, ii praemium immortalitatis accipient: quorum autem peccata et scelera detecta fuerint, non resurgent sed cum impiis in easdem tenebras recondentur, ad certa supplicia destinati. (ibid., vii. 21.)

20 Lactantius' thought recalls some aspects of Tertullian's thought in this respect, the custodia of Lactantius being approximate to the inferus of Tertullian. But see c.3.

21 Tr. in Ps. 118.

22 Tr. in Ps. 135, 3; cf. in Ps. 137, 2f.

23 Tr. in Ps. 51, 16, 17.

24 Tr. in Ps. 51, 18.

25 Tr. in Ps. 120; in Ps. 138; in Ps. 2.

26 Comm. in Matt. X. 19.

27 Iudicium enim ex ambiguis rebus exsistit, et ambiguitate adempta, iudicii non desideratur examen. Ex quo ne ~~ne~~ infideles quidem necesse est iudicari; quia ambiguitas cum infideles sint non resedit. Sed adempto in credentes non credentesque iudicio, causam Dominus iudicii et auctores in quos iudicari necesse esse adiecit. Sunt enim aliqui inter impios piosque qui medii sint, ex utroque admixti, neutri tamen proprie, quia in id ipsum constiterint ex utroque. (Tr. in Ps. 1, 22; CSEL XXII, 34).

28 Tr. in Ps. 118.

29 Tr. in Ps. 52, 17.

30 Ep. XXXIV, 5.

31 Expos. ps. 118, 2. 14.

32 De Bono Mortis, 5.

33 Hexaem. II, 5. 6.

34 De Paradiso, I.

35 Ep. LXXi 8, 9.

36 De Bono Mortis, 46.

37 De Cain, II, 31, 36.

38 De Joseph, 19.

39 De Bono Mortis, 48.

40 Expos. in Lucam, X, 92.

41 De Officiis, I., 237.

42 Dat ergo unicuique locum Dominus Iesus, hoc est, aptam pro uniuscuiusque meritis mansionem. .... Et ille quidem ascendit super omnes coelas ad Dei sedem: homines autem a primo coelo ad secundum, et deinceps a secundo ad tertium, et ab illo per distinctiones fere ad septimum coelum, atque in ipsam apsidem et summitatem coelorum qui merentur, ascendunt.
(Expos. Ps. 38, 17; CSEL LXIV, 197.)

43 De Bono Mortis, 55, 49.

44 op.cit., 57.

45 Si vivit qui in sinu est patriarchae Abrahae, quanto magis vivit qui suscripitur a Christo? Quomodo enim potest non in aeternum vivere, quem sempiterna vita suscepit, quem totum sibi Christus assumpsit, qui totus Verbi est, cuius vita abscondita est in Christo Iesu? Sed et qui in sinu Abrahae sedet, susceptus a Christo est. (Expos. ps. 118, 15. 26)

46 De Fide, III 27,

47 De Incarn., 40, 41.

48 De Officiis, I. 61

49 De Bono Mortis, 47.

50 De Fugg., 41.

51 Expos. ps. 118, 5, 44.

52 ibid., 10, 11; 13, 20.

53 Non unum est baptisma: unum est quod hic tradit Ecclesia, per aquam et Spiritum sanctum .... Sed sit hoc baptismum passionis, quo etiam sanguine suo unusquisque mundatur. Est etiam baptismum in paradisi vestibulo, quod antea non erat: sed posteaquam peccator exclusus est, coepit esse romphaea ignea, quam posuit Deus, quae antea non erat, quando peccatum non erat. Culpa coepit, et baptismum coepit: quo purificentur, qui in paradisum redire cupiebant, ut regressi dicerunt: 'Transivimus per ignem et aquam'. Illic per aquam, illic per ignem. Per aquam, ut abluantur peccata: per ignem, ut exurantur. (ibid., 3. 14; CSEL, LXll, 48)

54 Omnes oportet per ignem probari, quicumque ad paradisum redire desiderant; non enim otiose scriptum est, quod eiectis Adam et Eva de paradisi sede, posuit Deus in exitu paradisi gladium igneum versatilem. Omnes oportet transire per flammas, sive ille Joannes Evangelista sit ... De morte eius aliqui dubitaverunt, de transitu per ignem dubitare non possumus. Sive ille sit Petrus, qui claves accepit regni coelorum ... illo igitur igneo gladio iniquitas exuretur, quae sedet super talentum plumbeum. Ideo unus ignem illum sentire non potuit, qui est iustitia Dei Christus, quia peccatum non fecit; nihil enim ignis in eo quod exurere posset, invenit. (ibid., 20. 13, 14; CSEL, LXII, 451)

55 ibid, 3. 14.

56 Alius iste est ignis quo exuruntur peccata non voluntaria, sed fortuita, quem paravit servulis suis Dominus Iesus, ut eos ab ista commoratione, quae permixta est mortuis, emundet: alius ille ignis, quem deputavit diabolo et angelis eius, de quo dicit: Intrate in ignem in aeternum. (ibid., 3. 17; CSEL, LXII, 49)

57 ibid.

58 'Beati ambo', 'si quid' meae orationes 'valebunt' : 'nulla dies' vos silentio praeteribit, nulla inhonoratos vos mea transibit oratio, nulla nox non donatos aliqua praecum mearum contextione transcurret : omnibus vos oblationibus frequentabo. (De obitu Valentiani Consolatio 78; CSEL, LXXIII, 365)

59 N.H. Baynes, Byzantine Studies and Other Essays, London, 1955, p.356.

60 Acts of Paul and Thecla; see earlier discussion in C.3. pp.81f.

61 Passio Perpetuae; see earlier discussion in C.3. pp.82f.

62 When Ambrose writes to Theodosius in 392 in outrage at the massacre at Thessalonica, he calls upon the Emperor to repent, begging on behalf of his offspring, making particular reference to one 'Gratian', who is apparently newly born. No further record appears of this son, so it is likely that he died in infancy, and if the reference in the De obitu Valentiniani is to him, then one presumes he died before or in the Autumn of 392.

63 According to Aland, (Did the Early Church baptize infants? E.T. London, 1963, p.106), the present extent of the evidence is sufficient to demonstrate that the belief in the sinlessness of infants was held continuously till the time of Tertullian. So long as and wherever this assumption held good, infant baptism was plainly not necessary, indeed it was superfluous, the more so while the eschatological expectation of the nearness of the End persisted, and it certainly did continue right up to the heart of the second century. (Only under this presupposition is a phenomenon like Montanism to be explained.) If the Last day is to come at any moment, it will take the sinless infants and little children immediately to God. Towards the end of the second century, Montanism destroyed what remained of this 'near expectation', while the Shepherd of Hermas produced an argument that theologically explained and justified the postponement of the Second Advent. Once this occurred and from the moment that the taint of original sin was believed to apply to the newborn child, then as Aland argues, its baptism became a necessity under the new presuppositions, for it could no longer be assumed that the Last Day would come in

the lifetime of these children. So far as Aland is able to judge from the sources, this fundamental change occurred at the beginning of the third century, it following close on the change in the eschatological outlook. It is against this changing background that the Passio Perpetuae is set, which, of course, catalysed the change. Accordingly from that time the custom of infant baptism spread. Certainly Ambrose upheld it: De Abraham II, ll. 79 - 81; Expos. Evangelii Secundum Lucam I, 36 - 38. For an alternative interpretation of the evidence relating to the spread of infant baptism, see Jeremias, Infant baptism in the first four centures, ET., London, 1960.

64 non tam deplorandam quam prosequendam orationibus reor, nec maestificandam lacrimis tuis, sed magis oblationibus animam eius Domino commendandam arbitror. (Ep. XXXIX, 4).

65 De Excessu Frat., I. 80; De Obitu Valent., 78; Ep., XXXIX, 4.

66 De Obitu Theodos., 36, 37.

67 De Excessu Frat., I.5.

68 Martyres obsecrandi, quorum videmur mobis quodam corporis pignore patrocinium vindicare. Possunt pro peccatis rogare nostris, qui proprio sanguine, etiam si qua habuerunt peccata, laverunt; isti enim sunt Dei martyres, nostri praesules, speculatures vitae, actuumque nostrorum. Non erubescamus eos intercessores nostrae infirmitatis adhibere; quia ipsi infirmitates corporis, etiam cum vicerent, cognoverunt. (De Viduis, IX 55; PL XVI, 251)

69 Si apostoli et martyres adhuc in corpore constituti possunt orare pro caeteris, quando pro se adhuc debent esse solliciti: quanto magis post coronas victorias et triumphos? Unus homo Moyses sexcentis millibus armatorum impetrat a Deo veniam: et Stephanus, imitator Domini sui, et primus martyr in Christo, pro persecutoribus veniam deprecatur, et postquam cum Christo esse caeperint, minus valebunt? (Contra Vigilantium 6; PL. XXIII 359)

70 Vale, Paula, et cultoris tui ultimam senectutem orationibus iuva. Fides et opera tua Christo te sociant, praesens facilius quod postulas impetrabis. (Ep., 108, 33; CSEL LV, 350)

71 Ep. XXXIX, 6.

72 cf. in Osee, 13 and Ep, XXIII, 3; XXXIX, 3.

73 Nunc igitur pro brevi labore aeterna beatitudine fruitur; excipitur Angelorum choris, Abrahae sinibus confovetur (Ep.,XXIII 3). Does Jerome envisage the bosom of Abraham to be in Hades or Heaven here? The reference to 'choirs of angels' might suggest the latter.

74 in Dan., i.3; vii 9.

75 During the third and fourth centuries, some of the leading ideas of Origen, such as the pre-existence of souls, were developed by his disciples (and notably by Evagrius Ponticus). Jerome although in his earlier days a sympathiser of Origenism, eventually was to be one of the leading attackers of the movement. But see on this: J.N.D. Kelly, Jerome, His Life, Writings and Controversies, London 1975.

76 Notandum autem quod et si impiis post mortem spes veniae non est: sunt tamen qui de levioribus peccatis, cum quibus obligati defuncti sunt, post mortem possunt absolvi. (In Proverbia xi 7.)

77 See chapter 3, note 95; see also Kenneth Kirk, The Vision of God, London 1931. pp.111-173 (d esp. pp.130-9).

78 John Burnaby, Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine, London 1938. p.235.

79 It could be argued with some credibility that the Western concern with merit took its root as much in the thought-forms of popular religion as anything else, inasmuch as at its heart it embodied a simple quid pro quo outlook. The martyr or confessor has done so much for God. Therefore God is in debt and must reward his servant. This notion of merit clashed of course, with Augustine's rigid conception of grace and he resolved to hold the two in tension. In a later period still, with the rise of scholasticism, the revival of Roman law and the study of logic, the inherited understanding of merit was re-worked into the very fabric of Catholic theology. This level of systematisation and legalism, however, properly belongs to the 12th century, and it is argued, is not to be read back into the 4th century. For example, Daniélou has commented: 'All attempts to trace them back to legal origins have come to nothing. They are common ideas, borrowed from the vocabulary that was current at the time and preserving a certain flexibility, and it is precisely this that makes them difficult to define.' (The Origins of Latin Christianity, E.T., London 1977, p.345) See below, n.81, 83, 84.

80 For the New Testament understanding of merit and reward, see Kenneth Kirk, op.cit., pp.140-5.

81 Vladimir Lossky (The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, ET., Cambridge 1957, pp.197f) seeks an explanation of the differing understanding of merit in the East, in the general attitude of Eastern theology towards grace and free will. He points out that the Eastern tradition has never separated the

two elements of grace and human freedom. Both are manifested simultaneously and cannot be conceived apart from each other. He makes reference to St. Gregory of Nyssa (p.197) who in his De Instituto Christiano describes very clearly the reciprocal bond that makes of grace and free will two poles of one and the same reality: 'As the grace of God cannot descend upon souls which have no share in grace ... the righteousness of works and the grace of the Spirit, coming together to the same place. (προελθοῦσαι εἰς ταυτόν), fill the soul in which they are united with the life of the blessed.' Thus, Lossky points out, grace is not a reward for the merit of the human will; but no more is it the cause of the 'meritorious acts' of our free will. For it is not a question of merits but of a co-operation, of a synergy of the two wills, divine and human, a harmony in which grace bears ever more and more fruit, and is appropriated - 'acquired' - by the human person. Grace is seen therefore as a presence of God within us which demands constant effort on our part; these efforts, however, in no way determine grace, nor does grace act upon our liberty as if it were external or foreign to it. This doctrine, Lossky claims, is faithful to the apophatic spirit of the Eastern tradition and expresses the mystery of the coincidence of grace and human freedom in good works, without recourse to positive and rational terms as typifies the legalism of the West.

82 Hilary, De Trin. xi, 19.

83 Tertullian, De Paenitentia, 2. cf., Cyprian, de op. et el.,26; Hilary, in Ps. 2, 16; in Ps. 91. 10.

84 It should not be thought from this analysis that the East was totally lacking in legalism or in any concern with merit as such. This was not the case - in spite of Lossky's assertion that 'the notion of merit is foreign to the Eastern tradition' (op.cit., p.197). The spirituality of the East was, by this time, closely linked with the growing monastic movement which in its emphasis upon ascetism as a path to salvation, effectively incorporated a theology of merit (see Kirk, op.cit., pp.174-191). For example, Abba Cronius said, 'man does not advance towards any reward without bodily affliction' (Benedicta Ward, The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, The Alphabetical Collection, London 1975, p.99). Commenting on this tradition of Byzantine asceticism, N.H. Baynes has written:

> East-Roman mysticism goes back to Origen and his statement of the method of contemplation (θεωρία) by which man can attain to the Vision of God ... And from Origen mystical asceticism passes through Evagrius to Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century until it is renewed in the eleventh century by Symeon the New Theologian, and after a long gap issues in the Hesychasm of the Athos monasteries. But there is another line in Byzantine asceticism which seeks

> salvation, not in a mystical Vision of God, but in obedience and in charity shown to the other members of the monastic brotherhood. The solitary cannot practise the virtues of the true Christian ascetic precisely because he has no fellow Christian whose presence is necessary for such practice. And this type of asceticism received its formation from St. Basil. In the days of the persecutions martyrdom was regarded as the highest perfection: In Basil's conception nothing has changed. Henceforth, martyrdom will consist in obedience absolute and unquestioning, the complete surrender of one's will to one's superior ... And it was Basil's conception of monasticism which inspired Theodore the Studite, and his rules lay so much stress on works that they would have rejoiced the heart of St. James the Apostle! ('The Thought World of East-Rome' in Byzantine Studies and Other Essays, London 1955, p.30).

One can see the close association of martyrdom and monasticism in the way in which the term 'confessor' was becoming linked with that of 'martyr', each of which being held in equal esteem. The term 'martyr' was reserved strictly for those who had been killed out of hatred for the faith, while 'confessor' remained the title of honour for those who had witnessed for the faith without flinching, but through no fault of their own had not received the assured crown of martyrdom. More specifically, the title 'confessor' referred to any man of holy life (and particularly a monk) who by virtue of his asceticism and devout obedience had rendered great service to the church without martyrdom. For example, as Athanasius informs us in a telling and instructive phrase about St. Anthony, 'when the persecution finally ceased, Anthony went back to his solitary cell; and there he was a daily martyr to his conscience, ever fighting the battles of the faith'. (Vita 47; for an English translation see R.T. Meyer, Ancient Christian Writers, vol. 10. 1950). The reasons behind the emergence of monasticism and its close correlation with martyrdom need not concern us here. (See on this, Edward A. Malone, The Monk and the Martyr, The Catholic University of America, Studies in Christian Antiquity No: 12, Washington D.C., 1950). But suffice it to say, that many of the categories of thought which had hitherto applied only to martyrs, with the rise of monasticism, now become transferrable to monks - the 'white martyrs'. For example, the monk like the martyr may be entreated in prayer (see C.3. note 76). So we find in an invocation (wrongly) ascribed to St. Ambrose, 'I ask for the prayers of the martyrs, who did not hesitate to shed their blood for the truth ... I entreat the intercessions of the confessors, who endured the battle with our enemy the tempter, while they lived a holy life in the catholic peace, or also the gainsaying of the heretics in the lengthy conflict, and to say truth, won the palms of a longer-drawn-out and secret martyrdom' (quoted by Dix, op.cit., p.374). Similarly, just as the martyr by virtue of his suffering is at death immediately united with God, so the monk in virtue of his asceticism and prayer is granted the vision of God at his death

and immediate entry into heaven. A striking example of this is the death of Abba Sisoes (Ward, op.cit., p.180, saying 14):

> It was said of Abba Sisoes that when he was at the point of death, while the Fathers were sitting beside him, his face shone like the sun. He said to them, 'Look, Abba Anthony is coming'. A little later he said, 'Look, the choir of prophets is coming.' Again his countenance shone with brightness and he said, 'Look, the choir of apostles is coming.' His countenance increased with brightness and lo, he spoke with someone. Then the old men asked him, 'With whom are you speaking, Father?' He said, 'Look, the angels are coming to fetch me, and I am begging them to let me do a little penance.' The old men said to him, 'You have no need to do penance, father.' But the old man said to them, 'Truly, I do not think I have even made a beginning yet.' Now they all knew that he was perfect. Once more his countenance suddenly became like the sun and they were all filled with fear. He said to them, 'Look, the Lord is coming and he's saying, "Bring me the vessel from the desert,"' Then there was a flash of lightening and all the house was filled with a sweet odour.

See also, Ward, op.cit., p.54, saying 1; p.58, saying 5; p.70, saying 4 and p.115, saying 33. It was this tradition of thought which was to produce the inspiration for Western spirituality by influencing the development of Western monasticism. The Rule of St. Benedict, for example, recommends the Institutes and Conferences of Cassian, 'and the lives of the Fathers, as also the Rule of our holy father Basil' (Rule cap.73) as 'tools of virtue for good-living and obedient monks,' thus ensuring that the tradition of desert teaching passed on by Cassian world become one of the most potent and formative influences in Western monasticism.

85 The influence of the Latin language upon the development of Western thought about the departed has already been noted. A similar influence may be noted in its liturgy, for it was more or less a matter of course that in the liturgy of the Church the language employed should be the language prevailing in the locality concerned, especially if it was a language of a culture with a literature. The oldest documents of the Christian liturgy are in Greek, as has been seen. The divine services, therefore, first took on Greek colourings. Even in the Latin West, the divine services were conducted for a long time in Greek - witness the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus. This does not mean that the Church held her services in Greek amongst a Latin-speaking population; it means that in the Western part of the Roman Empire up to the third century, the majority of Christians were Greeks. Only gradually did the Latin element grow in strength; this was first the case in North Africa where Tertullian wrote in Latin. Only since the second half of the third century did this become true also in Rome. Henceforth it is the Latin language that

determines the style and make-up of the prayers and Western liturgy in general. In passing over to Latin, the Romans were not satisfied merely to translate older Greek prayers; the genius of the Latin language and the Roman's particular intellectual character were allowed to make their own contribution. Inevitably, however, this process of assimilation was gradual and the real impact of Latin thought does not become visible until the liturgies of the seventh, eight and ninth centures (see the Leonine and Gregorian Sacramentaries). This was particularly so with the liturgy of the dead, where thoughts of purgation and suffering do not predominate until the medieval era. (see T.S.R. Boase, Death in the Middle Ages, London 1972). Already, however, by the fifth century, the basic characteristics of the Roman rite which was to become normative in the West, were emerging. For example, according to Edmund Bishop, in his famous essay on the genius of the Roman rite (Bishop, Liturgica Historica, Oxford 1918), shortness, conciseness, clarity and austerity were the significant characteristics of the Roman liturgy. In addition he designates a characteristic 'juridical way of thinking', and he cites a typical example in the prayer Quam oblationem which is in the Canon of the Mass. In this prayer the condition of the sacrificial gift is described with five expressions, in order to exclude any doubt: Quam oblationem tu Deus, in omnibus, quaesumus, benedictam, adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque facere digneris: ut nobis corpus et sangius fiat dilectissimi Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

86 For example, Cyprian and Ambrose transmit to Augustine the ugly theory of almsgiving as a stipulated price of forgiveness. Cyprian could write for instance, (de op. et el., c.2) - 'Alms and faith cleanse from sin'; and (de orat. dom., 33) - 'Alms compel God to listen to prayer' (merita nostri operis). Ambrose could even more emphatically state (de el. et jej.,20) - 'You have money; redeem your sins. God is not to be bought, but you can be bought; you are sold under sin - buy yourself back with works, buy yourself with money. Money is cheap, but mercy is precious.' They themselves probably drew from an older tradition still which may be traced back to II Clement 16. 4. On this subject, see Burnaby, op.cit., p.237; Kirk op.cit., pp. 131 & 139.

87 Conf., vii,

88 The quotations from the Confessions in the following paragraphs are taken from the translation by F.J. Sheed, London 1944.

89 Ponite hoc corpus ubicumque: nihil vos eius cura conturbet; tantum illus vos rogo, ut ad domini altare meminer itis mei, ubiubi fueritis. (Conf., IX xi, 27; CSEL XXXIII 218).
N.B., translation slightly adapted from Sheed.

90 ibid., Some scholars have seen in such phrases the influence of Platonic dualism, see on this; Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine, London 1960; Paul Henry, 'Philosophy and Mysticism in the Confessions of St. Augustine,' D.R., 79 (1961) pp. 297-316; Portalié, A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine, E.T. London 1960, pp. 95-104.

91 Neque enim decere arbitrabamur funus illud questibus lacrimosis gemitibusque celebrare, quia his plerumque solet deplorari quaedam miseria morientium aut quasi omnimoda extinctio. (Conf., IX., xii, 29; CSEL XXXIII 220)

92 cum offrerretur pro ea sacrificium pretii nostri. (ibid., 32; CSEL XXXIII 221).

93 Ego autem iam sanato corde ab illo vulnere, in quo postea redargui carnales affectus, fundo tibi, deus noster, pro illa famula tua longe aliud lacrimarum genus, quod manat de concusso spiritu consideratione periculorum omnis animae, quae in Adam moritur. Quamquam illa in Christo vivificata etiam nondum a carne resoluta sic vixerit, ut laudetur nomen tuum in fide moribusque eius, non tamen audeo dicere, ex quo eam per baptismum regenerasti, nullum verbum exisse ab ore eius contra praeceptum tuum. Et dictum est a veritate, filio tuo: si quis dixerit fratri suo: fatue, reus erit gehennae ignis; et vae etiam laudabili vitae hominum, si remota misericordia discutiam eam. Quia omnino non exquiris delicta vehementer, fiducialiter speramus aliquem apud te locum. Quisquis autem tibi enumerat vera merita sua, quid tibi enumerat nisi munera tua? .... Ego itaque, laus mea et vita mea, deus cordis mei, sepositis paulisper bonis eius actibus, pro quibus tibi gaudens gratias ago, nunc pro peccatis matris meae deprecor te: exaudi me per medicinam vulnerum nostrorum, quae pependit in ligno et sedens ad dexteram tuam te interpellat pro nobis. Scio misericorditer operatam et ex corde dimisisse debita debitoribus suis: dimitte et tu illi debita sua, si qua etiam contraxit per annos post aquam salutis. Dimitte, domine, dimitte, obsecro, ne intres cum ea in iudicium. Superexultet misericordia iudicio, quoniam eloquia tua vera sunt et promisisti misericordiam misericordibus..... Namque illa imminente die resolutionis suae non cogitavit suum corpus sumptuouse contegi aut condi aromatis aut monumentum electum concupivit aut curavit sepulchrum patrium: non ista mandavit nobis, sed tantummodo memoriam sui ad altare tuum fieri desideravit, cui nullius diei praetermissione servierat, unde sciret dispensari victimam sanctam, ... Ad cuius pretii nostri sacramentum ligavit ancilla tua animam suam vinculo fidei. Nemo a protectione tua dirrumpat eam. Non se interponat nec ui nec insidiis leo et draco: neque enim respondebit illa nihil se debere, ne convincatur et obtineatur ab accusatore callido, sed respondebit dimissa debita sua ab eo, cui nemo reddet quod pro nobis non debens reddidit. (Conf., IX xiii, 34-36; CSEL XXXIII 223f.)

94 Sit ergo in pace cum viro, ante quem nulli et post quem nulli nupta est, cui servivit fructum tibi afferens cum tolerantia, ut eum quoque lucraretur tibi. Et inspira, domine meus, deus meus, inspira seruis tuis, fratribus meis, filiis tuis, dominis meis, quibus et corde et voce et litteris servio, ut quotquot hoc legerint, meminerint ad altare tuum Monnicae, famulae tuae, cum Patricio, quondam eius coniuge, per quorum carnem introduxisti me in hac vita, quemadmodum nescio. Meminerint cum affectu pio parentum meorum in hac luce transitoria et fratum meorum sub te patre in matre catholica et ciuium meorum in aeterna Hierusalem, cui suspirat peregrinatio populi tui ab exitu usque ad reditum, ut quod a me illa poposcit extremum uberius ei praestetur in multorum orationibus per confessiones quam per orationes meas. (ibid., 37)

95 One notes several of the elements (already noted) of the Christian funeral, appearing in Augustine's account. For example, the psalmody, the offering of prayers, the procession to the graveside and the offering of the eucharist. I do not propose to re-examine this evidence but refer back to my earlier discussion in c.3. see p. 68f. and relevant notes (esp. n.24).

96 See c.3., p.65f; though as was emphasised there, the language used does not necessarily refer to an intermediate state.

97 This is further evidence for the frequent liturgical commemoration of the faithful departed. One assumes that Monica's name would have been inscribed upon the diptychs of her church (presumably her home church in North Africa); though it is not improbable that by his frequent references to her remembrance 'at the altar', Augustine refers not simply to her commemoration in the Sunday eucharist but to her specific commemoration on certain days and notably her year's mind. See earlier discussion on the emerging conventions of Christian mourning. c.3. p.69 ; and n.18; see also discussion on Tertullian and eucharistic commemoration, c.3. pp.84-6.

98 De An. et Orig., II, xv, 21; Enchir., XXIX 110; Serm., 172, 2. Similar thought is to be found in the writings of Cyril of Jerusalem - Cat. Mystag., V, 9.

99 Gregory the Great, Dial., IV, 39f.

100 Time prevents an examination of Augustine's eucharistic theology. See on this: Portalié, op.cit., pp.243-57; Francis Clark, Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation, London 1960; C.W. Dugmore, Eucharistic Theology - then and now, London 1966; J.N.D.Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, London 1958; cf. H.B. Swete, 'Eucharistic Belief in Second and Third Centuries', JTS, III (1901) pp.161-77.

101 In the fourth century millenarian ideas had thrown a considerable amount of obscurity on the question of the state of the departed between death and judgment, and in past scholarship much of the debate on Augustine's views has centred round the issue of the extent to which (if at all) Augustine was affected by millenarian opinions. For example, it has been claimed that Augustine did not think that the souls of the just enjoyed the vision of God until the resurrection because (at least in part) of his millenarian opinions. Turmel asserts ('Eschatologie à la fin du IVe siècle,' Revue d'histoire, 1900, pp.2-3, 59.) that Augustine kept alive 'the belief in the postponement of punishment until after the resurrection,' for he says, 'according to St. Augustine, the soul deprived of its body has only a blunted sensibility and is incapable of keen joy or suffering.' Portalié (p.291) on the other hand, opposes Turmel on this issue asserting that Augustine taught that immediately after death the eternal destiny of each soul is fixed, the guilty to be enclosed in a place of torture, the just in regions of bliss.' Neither opinion is correct in itself. That Augustine at some stage in his life accepted millenarian views is clear - De Civit. Dei XX, 7; Serm., 259, 2. but, from the latter reference, it can only have been of a very moderate kind. Furthermore, it is apparent that he was 'less interested in the Thousand Year Reign itself than in the familiar theme of the Church as a corpus permixtum until the coming of Christ.' (Gerald Bonner, 'Augustine and Millenarianism' - unpublished article). However, towards the end of his life it is equally clear that he rejected his former standpoint. This was possibly due to his abhorrence of vain superstitions and gross materialism attached to the views, particularly as current in Africa. His denunciation of the Apocalypse of Paul may be connected in this respect. (so, Bonner, op.cit.,)

102 Portalié, op.cit., p.291.

103 J. Baillie, And the Life Everlasting, London 1934, p.198.

104 see C.4. section C; also A.J. Mason, Purgatory, the State of the faithful departed and the Invocation of Saints, London 1901, p.29.

105 All English quotations from the Enchiridion in the following pages are taken from the translation of the Benedictine text by E. Evans, London, 1953.

106 Tempus autem quod inter hominis mortem et ultimam resurrectionem interpositum est, animas abditis receptaculis continet, sicut unaquaeque digna est vel requie vel aerumna pro eo quod sortita est in carne dum viveret. (Enchir., XXIX, 109; C.C. XLVI. 108)

107 De praedestinatione sanctorum XII, 24.

108 Aut ergo ad illa fertur poenalia aut ad illa itidem similia corporalibus nec tamen poenarum, sed quietis atque guadiorum. (De Genesi ad Litteram Lib. XII. 32.; CSEL XXVIII (i) 426.)

109 ... omnes animae, cum de saeculo exierint, diversas receptiones suas. Habent gaudium bonae, malae tormenta. Sed cum facta fuerit resurrectio, et bonorum gaudium amplius erit, et malorum tormenta graviora, quando cum corpore torquebuntur. (In Johannis Evangelium Tr. 124, xlix, 10. C.C. XXXVI. 425f; cf. De Gen. ad Litt. Lib. XII. 35.)

110 Serm. 280. 4-5.

111 ibid., cf., Serm. 328.6.

112 Et haec quidem vita, quam nunc beati martyres habent, quamuis iam nullis possit saeculi huius felicitatibus vel suavitatibus conparari, parva particula promissionis agitur, immo solacium dilationis. Veniet autem retributionis dies, ubi corporibus redditis totus homo recipiat quod meretur .... sicut enim plurimum distat inter laetitias miseriasue somniantium et vigilantium, ita multum interest inter tormenta vel gaudia mortuorum et resurgentium. (Serm., 280, 5; P.L. XXXVIII. 1283.)

113 See relevant sections of earlier discussions and Tertullian, De Anima 55; De Resurr. Carnis 43; Cyprian, Ad Fortunatum de exhort. Martyrii xii. in fine.

114 .... post mortem ipsa carne deposita transcensis etiam similitudinibus corporalium non sic videre posse incommutabilem substantiam, ut sancti angeli vident, sive alia latentiore causa sive ideo, quia inest ei naturalis quidam adpetitus corpus administrandi: quo adpetitu retardatur quodammodo, ne tota intentione pergat in illud summum caelum, quamdiu non subest corpus, cuius administratione adpetitus ille conquiescat. (De Gen. ad Litt. Lib. XII, 35; CSEL XXVIII (i) 432).

115 Retract., I, xiv, 2. This view in fact reflects Augustine's understanding of the spiritual life which has its ultimate goal, its summum bonum in the vision of God. Though the contemplation of God really belongs to the next life, it was also Augustine's view that even in this life some beginnings of it are possible, some passing glimpses or intuitions of divine things. He can write: 'Contemplation is only begun in this life, to be perfected in the next.' (In Iohan. Evan. Tr.124 5). Thus a progress is envisaged which was only really to be fulfilled at the resurrection. See treatise De Quantitate Animae.

116 Non sic est patria illa Ierusalem, ubi omnes boni ... Ibi omnes iusti et sancti, qui fruuntur Verbo Dei sine lectione, sine litteris;

quod enim nobis per paginas scriptum est, per faciem Dei illi cernunt. Qualis patria! (Enar. in Ps.119. 6; C.C. XL. 1783.)

117 e.g., Quaest. Evan. ex Matt. et Luca II, 38.

118 As Ntedika has commented: 'L'attention d'Augustin se porte avant tout sur l'intérim de temps entre la mort et la résurrection.' (L'Évolution de la doctrine du Purgatoire chez St. Augustin, Paris 1966, p.12). Not that Augustine denied the overall significance of final eschatology. Far from it! As Ntedika later points out, Augustine in his talk about the state between death and judgment continues to confer pride of importance to the final eschatology because any theology of an intermediate state necessarily takes its meaning from the ultimate vindication - 'Il continue à conférer la primauté à l'eschatologie finale, et à considérer l'eschatologie individuelle comme un élément provisoire et en partie réformable.' (p.13)

119 Quaest. Evan. ex Matt. et Luca II, 38.

120 Serm., 280, 5.

121 At si servaveris adversario tuo bonam voluntatem, et cum eo consenseris; pro iudice invenies patrem, pro ministro saevo angelum tollentem in sinum Abrahae, pro carcere paradisum. (Serm., 109, 4; P.L. XXXVIII. 638.)

122 Enar. in Ps. 36. 10 c.f., Ep. 187, ii, 5-6.

123 Enar. in Ps. 30; Serm., 3, 8.

124 Ep., 187, 3. For a discussion of this ref. see MacCulloch, The Harrowing of Hell, Edinburgh 1930, pp.122 f.

125 ibid.

126 Quem non multo post conversionem nostram et regenerationem per baptismum tuum ipsum etiam fidelem catholicum castitate perfecta atque continentia tibi servientem in Africa apud suos, cum tota domus eius per eum christiana facta esset, carne soluisti. Et nunc ille vivit in sinu Abraham. Quidquid illud est, quod illo significatur sinu, ibi Nebridius meus vivit, dulcis amicus meus, tuus autem adoptiuus ex liberto filius: ibi vivit. Nam quis alius tali animae locus? Ibi vivit, unde me mutta interrogabat homuncionem inexpertum. Iam non ponit aurem ad os meum, sed spiritale os ad fontem tuum et bibit, quantum potest, sapientiam pro auiditate sua sine fine felix. (Conf., IX. iii, 6; CSEL XXXIII 201).

127 Van Der Meer is incorrect when he states that Augustine was always of the opinion that 'the wicked are chastised without respite' (Augustine The Bishop, E.T. London 1961, p.473). Augustine testifies to the contemporary belief in the temporary cessation or respite of eternal pains, a belief which though he is not inclined to accept, neither is he prepared to refuse it - 'they may think, if they like, that these pains, at certain intervals, are somewhat mitigated.' His distrust of any belief in the sabbath - a day's respite is conditioned by the fear that it may lead to a final liberation of the damned at the intercession of the saints - a belief to which he refers in the De Civitate Dei. He therefore insists that the wrath of God still abides with such sinners, and their condemnation is eternal. The prayers of the Church merely makes 'damnation less intolerable'. (See Enchir. XXIX. 110, 112; De Civ. Dei, XXI 13, 16, 24). A similar idea is found in the fourth century hymn-writer Prudentius, who says in his Cathoemerinon (V. 125; Migne, P.L. LIX. 827f) that the suffering of the tormented souls sub styge are remitted on Easter Eve, the time when Christ returned on high from Acheron. Instances such as these provide the basis for the fuller medieval belief, current in many popular works, in the occasional cessation of the pains of the damned at the intercession of the saints, e.g., in the Apocalypse of Mary (c.9th century), the Virgin, joined by the patriarchs, prophets and saints, prays for sinners whom she has seen in Hell. Then the Father sends the Son to tell these sinners that they will have rest on the days of Pentecost. Intercession for the lost is also found in the Syriac and Arabic versions of the Assumption of the Virgin. In the latter version, the Virgin asks Our Lord to pity the sinners and to treat them mildly and he promises to do this. Similar ideas of the temporary cessation of the pains of the damned occur in later recensions of the Apocalypse of Paul (which we know Augustine denounced - In Iohan. Evan. Tr. 98, 8); and in earlier Judaic literature (e.g., Apocalypse of Moses, 35, 36f, where the tears of the righteous and the due performance of the prayers had the effect of lessening the pains of Hell), which may be a possible source for subsequent Christian speculation.

128 Quam beata mansio, fides eam videt .... Ubi sunt sancti isti, putamus? Ibi ubi bene est. Quid quaeris amplius? Non nosti locum, sed cogita meritum. Ubicumque sunt cum Deo sunt. Iustorum animae in manu Dei sunt. (Serm., 298, 3.; P.L. XXXVIII 1366).

129 Transierunt de hoc mundo ad Patrem. Quaesierunt Christum, confitendo; tenuerunt, moriendo. (Serm., 331, 2; P.L.XXXVIII, 1459).

130 De Civ. Dei XX, ix, 2.

131 Although the Book of Revelation only speaks of the martyrs of blood as reigning with Christ, Augustine admits that others also, in a

certain sense, reign with Christ. 'The martyrs are the only ones mentioned because to them especially this kingdom belongs; they especially rule after death. But it is the lot of all, and the other departed souls must be included in it.' (De Civ. Dei XX, ix, 2). The martyrs are thus in some sense the type of all Christians having already achieved the destiny which ultimately belongs to all. (cf., In Johan. Evan. Tr. 124. xlix.10).

132 See Van Der Meer, op.cit., plate 20.

133 Mensa magna est, ubi epulae sunt ipse dominus mensae. Nemo pascit convivas de se ipso: hoc facit Dominus Christus; ipse invitator, ipse cibus et potus .... O beati qui sic biberunt calicem istum! finierunt dolores, et acceperunt honores. (Serm., 329, 1, 2; P.L. XXXVIII, 1455).

134 A. Michel and M. Jugie in the DTC proudly assert that: 'La grande autorité de St. Augustin a réduit les perspectives eschatologiques à leurs exactes proportions' (ibid., 1223), and find in his work a precise exposition of the doctrine of Purgatory. Ntedika, more cautiously (and probably more perceptively) remarks in the conclusion to his book (p.66) that: 'L'évolution de la doctrine du purgatoire, St. Augustin ne l'a ni entamée, ni conclue. Quand il est intervenu, deux éléments étainet déjà en présence: la doctrine, des suffrages pour les morts et celle du feu purificateur du jugement. Ces éléments, il va les reprendre et les faire progresser, mais sans jamais les associer. Nulle part en effet nous ne l'avons vu établir une relation entre les suffrages pour les morts et la doctrine du feu purificateur.'

135 Sive ergo in hac tantum vita homines ista patiuntur sive etiam post hanc vitam talia quaedam iudicia subsequuntur, non abhorret, quantum arbitror, a ratione veritatis iste intellectus huiusce sententiae. (De Fide et Operibus XVI. 29; CSEL XLI 73).

136 Tale aliquid etiam post hanc vitam fieri incredibile non est, et utrum ita sit quaeri potest, et aut invenniri aut latere, nonnulos fideles per ignem quendam purgatorium, quanto magis minusue bona pereuntia dilexerunt, tanto tardius citiusque saluari; non tamen tales de quibus dictum est quod regnum dei non possidebunt, nisi convenienter paenitentibus eadem crimina remittantur. (Enchir., XVIII, 69; C.C. XLVI. 87)

137 Post istius sane corporis mortem, donec ad illum veniatur, qui post resurrectionem corporum futurus est damnationis et remunerationis ultimus dies, si hoc temporis intervallo spiritus defunctorum eius modi ignem dicuntur perpeti, quem non sentiant illi, qui non habuerunt tales mores et amores in huius corporis vita, ut eorum ligna, fenum, stipula consumatur; alii vero

sentiant, qui eius modi secum aedificia portaverunt, sive ibi tantum sive et hic et ibi, sive ideo hic ut non ibi saecularia, quamvis a damnatione venialia; concremantem ignem transitoriae tribulationis inveniant: non regarduo, quia forsitan verum est. (De Civit. Dei XXI, 26; CSEL XL (ii) 571.)

138 Sed temporarias poenas alii in hac vita tantum, alii post mortem, alii et nunc et tunc, verum tamen ante iudicium illud severissimum novissimumque patiuntur. Non autem omnes veniunt in sempiternas poenas, quae post illud iudicium sunt futurae, qui post mortem sustinent temporales. Nam quibusdam, quod in isto non remittitur, remitti in futuro saeculo, id est, ne futuri saeculi aeterno supplicio puniantur, iam supra diximus. (De Civit, Dei XXI, 13; C.S.E.L. XL (ii) 543.)

139 Quocirca hic omne meritum comparatur quo possit post hanc vitam relevari quispiam vel gravari. Nemo autem se speret quod hic neglexerit, cum obierit apud dominum promereri. (Enchir., XXIX, 110; CC. XLVI. 108.)

140 Sicut etiam facta resurrectione mortuorum non deerunt, quibus post poenas, quas patiuntur spiritus mortuorum,inpertiatur misericordia, ut in ignem non mittantur aeternum. (De Civit. Dei XXI, 24; CSEL. XL (ii) 559.)

141 Enar. in Ps.37. 3.

142 This was the opinion of Clement of Alexandria and Origen. For discussion of Augustine's views see article 'Purgatoire', DTC VIII (i) 1222.

143 Ita plane quamvis salvi per ignem, gravior tamen erit ille ignis, quam quidquid potest homo pati in hac vita. Et nostis quanto hic passi sunt mali, et possunt pati. (Enar. in Ps. 37. 3; C.C. XXXVIII 384.)

144 sed etiam de illo qui emendabit eos qui per ignem salvi erunt (ibid.)

145 Ntedika also points out in this connection the difference in terminology used by Augustine (op. cit., p.11). He points out that whereas in reference to the punishment of the reprobate the terms damnatio and poenae temporariae are used; in connection with the purificatory expiation of the just, Augustine speaks of poenae purgatoriae, ignis purgatorius or transitorius or emandatorius, peccatum expiatum or purgatum. (cf., vocabulary of De Civit. Dei XXI. 13 & 24.)

146 Enchir., XVIII, 69.

147 As has already been noted, Augustine's thought is representative of an important stream in Christian thought which conceives of suffering as an integral component of the call to sanctity. Suffering is thought of as the highest form of action, a divinely potent means of satisfaction, recovery and enlargement for the soul. As T.S. Eliot expressed it:

> Who then devised the torment? Love.
> Love is the unfamiliar Name
> Behind the hands that wove
> The intolerable shirt of flame
> which human power cannot remove.
> We only live, only suspire
> Consumed by either fire or fire. (Little Gidding IV)

148 De Civit. Dei XXI, 26; De Fide et Operibus XVI. 29.

149 De Civit. Dei XXI, 26.

150 Purgatorias autem poenas nullas futuras opinetur, nisi ante illud ultimum tremendumque iudicium. (De Civit. Dei XXI, 16; CSEL. XL (ii) 548.)

151 Proinde quia post iudicium, cum fuerint etiam igne mundacti... in omnibus sanctis nullum invenietur omnino peccatum. (De Civit. Dei XX, 16; CSEL. XL (ii) 500)

152 Ntedika, p.45f. Ntedika's case is, however, in some sense part of the wider debate that surrounds the possible influence of millenarian opinions upon Augustine's theology - see above n.101

153 De Civit. Dei XXI, 13.

154 Ntedika, p.49.

155 Portalié, op.cit., p.297.

156 Ex his quae dicta sunt videtur evidentius apparere in illo iudicio quasdam quorundam purgatorias poenas futuras (De Civit. Dei XX, 25; CSEL XL (ii) 496.)

157 Portalié, p.295. Similarly in DTC: 'Augustin aurait été le premier Père à formuler d'une manière précise la doctrine due purgatoire, simplement insinuée chez les Pères antérieurs.' (1220.)

158 For an appreciation of the spirituality of Augustine see the following notable passages: Conf., VII, 16, 23; IX, 23-5; X, 65; Enar. in Ps. 41; De Quan. Animae 74, 75, 76; De Gen. ad Litt., XII; Ep., 147; C. Faustum XXII, 52-8; De Civ. Dei XIX 1, 2, 19; Serm., 103, 104. See also Cuthbert Butler, Western Mysticism, London 1922 (2nd ed.,) pp.22-90; Louis Bouyer (ed.,), La Spiritualité du Nouveau Testament et des Pères, Paris 1960, pp.555-86; Boyer C., 'Saint Augustin'; art; DSAM I 1101-26; Paul Henry, 'Philosophy and Mysticism in the Confessions of St. Augustine,' DR 79 (1961) pp.297-316; Trevor Rowe, St. Augustine - Pastoral Theologian, London 1974 pp. 7-23; F. Cayré, La Contemplation Augustinienne, Paris 1954.

159 De Trin. I.31 .

160 Time prevents another excursus beyond that which has already been given at the close of the previous section, into the place of merit in Latin theology. Suffice it to say, therefore,that in the last resort, Augustine's belief in the reality of merit is as much the consequence of his belief that our life on earth is always and to the end a pilgrimage as anything else. As Burnaby points out (Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine, London 1938, pp.240f) for Augustine the assurance of God's love can never be the assurance of our personal salvation. Even the saints have continually to pray that their sins may be forgiven. And, therefore, the whole purpose of this temporal existence is 'to win the merit whereby we may live in eternity' (Ep. 130. 14). Our real need is to become fit for the vision of God. Here on earth we can never surpass the 'lesser righteousness' which 'works merit'. That 'fulness of perfect righteousness' which is the enjoyment of God's presence will be given, like the resurrection of the dead, in ictu oculi - not as an ideal to be pursued through obedience, but as a reward to those who have been obedient here (contra du Ep. Pelag. III, 23); not a reward of external felicity to men who have already achieved moral perfection, but a merces perficiens, a reward which consists in the perfecting of the imperfect - given to those who by their hunger and thirst after righteousness have 'deserved' to be filled. (De Perfect. Iustif. 17; cf., Ep. 186; 10: non gratiam Dei aliquid meriti praecedit humani, sed ipsa gratia meretur augeri, ut aucta mereatur et perfici.) Thus ultimately (even paradoxically, salvation is nothing less than 'total dependence upon the unmerited grace of God' (Robert Evans, One and Holy, London 1972, p.107).

161 On the intellectual orientation of Augustine's thought in what is an 'educational' process as well as a 'spiritual' process, see George Howie, Educational Theory and Practice in St. Augustine, London 1969, pp.39-62.

162 De Civit. Dei XIX, 13.

163 De Peccat, merit et remiss. II. xiii, 20, 53. As Robert Evans has written: 'Augustine's doctrine of grace is correlative with an understanding of the character of the Christian life as laborious pilgramage towards a heavenly destiny, the arrival at which will for the first time bring fully sinless perfection to the lives of God's elect saints.' (op.cit.,p.104)

164 Tota igitur opera nostra, frates, in hac vita est, sanare oculum cordis, unde videatur Deus. Ad hoc sacrosancta mysteria celebrantur; ad hoc sermo Dei praedicatur; ad hoc exhortationes Ecclesiae morales, id est, pertinentes ad corrigendos mores, ad emendandas carnales concupiscentias, ad renuntiadum non voce tantum sed mutata vita huic saeculo; ad hoc agunt quidquid agunt divinae sanctaeque Litterae, ut purgetur illud interius ab ea re quae nos impedit ab aspectu Dei. (Serm., 88, 5; P.L. XXXVIII. 542).

165 Conf., VII, 13.

166 Sunt autem quidam qui se putant ad contemplandum deum et inhaerendum deo virtute propria posse purgari, quos ipsa superbia maxime maculat. Nullum enim vitium est cui magis divina lege resistitur. (De Trin., IV, xv. 20; C.C. L.186.)

167 De Civit. Dei X, 29.

168 pondus meum amor meus; eo feror, quocumque feror. Dono tuo accendimur et sursum ferimur; inardescimus et imus .... quoniam sursum imus ad pacem Hierusalem,(Conf. XIII. 9; CSEL, XXXIII 352)

169 Enar. in Ps. 37. 27.

170 De Civit. Dei X, 22.

171 De Trin., IV. ii. 4.

172 De Doctr. Christ., I, 10f.

173 sed malum sit aversio eius ab incommutabili bono et conversio ad mutabilia bona; quae tamen aversio atque conversio quoniam non cogitur, sed est voluntaria, digna et iusta eam miseriae poena subsequitur. (De lib. arb. II, 200; CSEL. LXXIV 87.)

174 Enchir. XVIII, 69; De Nat. Boni 34.

175 De Trin. I.31; De Gen. at Litt. Lib XII 35, 38.

176 In Augustine's whole complex of ideas about the relation of sin to punishment which is very largely congruent with that of his Latin contemporaries, is to be found an important stream of thought drawn from the ideas of the ordinary man, and especially of the ordinary Roman citizn and his ordinary assumptions of legal justice. In the laying down of penalties for social offences, the principle assumed by the criminal law is precisely that a man must not be 'left to himself'. He must be shown that wrong-doing does not pay, and the only way of ensuring this demonstration is by the infliction of an external pain which if 'left to himself' he would not have suffered, and which generally will fit the crime only in the sense of being roughly proportionate to its gravity. Needless to say, these common-sense notions were not only part of the mental heritage of the ordinary Christian in Roman Africa, but had become more inseparable than ever from his religious convictions in consequence of the influence of theologians like Tertullian and Cyprian. In Augustine one can detect a tendency for God to be assimilated to a human judge in this way. Instead of being Himself the external law whose working are above all violation, He appears the executor of a code which is protected from violation only by the application of external 'sanctions'. The God whose 'just judgment' is at one moment described as 'leaving the transgressor' (reliquere delinquentem), so that 'he to whom God had been true felicity may be his own punishment' (contra Jul. op. imp. IV. 33) is at another still asserted to be indeed the author of the evil which man suffers - though not of that which man does, (De Lib Arb I. 1). In this way the wrath of God is not his outraged holiness, but his 'righteous vengeance', (Ep., 184, 2).

177 As has already been pointed out (see above no.81 and 84) statements such as these are not meant to exclude the influence of legalism in Eastern thought.

178 Serm., 278, 12; 351, 4, 9; 5, 12.

179 See above n,86.

180 Ep., 153, 3, 15.

181 Serm., 9; 11; 17; 18; 131. 7.

182 See Van Der Meer, op.cit., p.384 & n.178.

183 Serm. 98. 6.

184 Ep., 153, 3, 7.

185 Ep., 151, 9.

186 Enchir., XViii 69 - for Latin see above n. 136.

187 De Civit. Dei XXl, 13 - for Latin see above no.138.

188 It was an inevitable consequence of Augustine's theology of original sin that he should assert that all unbaptized infants who died went to Hell. Augustine was not alone in this opinion (see above n.63 and art. by Peter Gumpel, 'Unbaptized Infants: May they be saved?' DR., 72 (pp.412-20). The severity of this judgment was tempered by his assertion that their penalty is omnium mitissima (Enchir., XXII, 93) and elsewhere he considers their state in Hell to be preferable to non-existence! (Contra Iul., V, xi, 44); It is interesting to note that Augustine interprets the case of Dinocrates as being one of someone who was baptised but who had probably apostasised, (De Natura et origine animae, I, x, 12; CSEL, LX, 312).

189 non solum poenis non praeparetur aeternis, sed ne ulla quidem post mortem purgatoria tormenta patiatur (De Civit. Dei XXi. 16; CC XLVIII 782)

190 Possidius, Vita Augustini, 31; The identification of these psalms is disputed - see Bonner, op.cit., p.155, n.3.

191 Possidius, ibid.

192 see on this: F. Cayré, La Contemplation Augustinienne, Paris 1954.

193 De Quant. Anim., 79, 80.

194 ibid.,

195 De Trin., XII, 22.

196 'Contemplation is only begun in this life, to be perfected in the next.' (Tract. in Ioan. CXXIV. 5).

197 Ac per hoc ipse nos facit petere, quem desideramus accipere; ipse nos facit quaerere, quem cupimus invenire; ipse nos facit pulsare, ad quem nitimur pervenire ..... Etiam hoc itaque agit acceptus, ut largius accipiendus: petendo, quaerendo, pulsando poseatur. (Enarr. in Ps. 118 XIV. 2; CC. XL. 1709.)

198 De Trin., XV, 2.

199 Ut non huic inquisitioni qua significatur amor, finem praestet inventio, sed amore crescente inquisitio crescat inventi (Enar. in Ps. 104, 3) cf., satiat quaerentem in quantum capit; et invenientem capaciorem facit, ut rursus quaerat impleri, ubi plus capere coeperit .... donec ad illam vitam veniamus, ubi sic impleamur ut capaciores non efficiamur, quia ita perfecti erimus ut iam non proficiamus. Tunc enim ostendetur nobis quod sufficit nobis. (In Ioan Ev. Jr. 63. L)
Austin Farrer incidentally provided the quintessence of Augustine's thought on this matter when he wrote: 'Faith and hope are the hands love stretches out after an everlasting good. When they hold what they longed for, they will be faith and hope no more; they will be all one with love. To trust God will not be other than to love him, when we see his face; it will not then be possible to ask if this is God, or whether God is good. And though there are infinite riches of his mind and heart, to delight us with a continual discovery, yet we shall not experience as hope an always present and expanding felicity.' (The Brink of Mystery, London 1976, p.30)

200 De Haer., 53.

201 Hoc enim a patribus traditum, universa observat Ecclesia, ut pro eis qui in corporis et sanguinis Christi communione defuncti sunt, cum ad ipsum sacrificium loco suo commemorantur, oretur, ac pro illis quoque id offerri commemoretur. (Serm. 172. 2; P.L. XXXVIII 936)

202 Neque negandum est defunctorum animas pietate suorum viventium relevari, cum pro illis sacrificium mediatoris offertur vel eleemosynae in ecclesia fiunt. Sed eis haec prosunt qui cum viverent haec ut sibi postea possent prodesse meruerunt. Est enim quidam vivendi modus, nec tam bonus ut non requirat ista post mortem, nec tam malus ut ei non prosint ista post mortem; est vero talis in bono ut ista non requirat, et est rursus talis in malo ut nec his valeat cum ex hoc vita transierit adiuvari. Quocirca hic omne meritum comparatur quo possit post hanc vitam relevari quispiam vel gravari. Nemo autem se speret quod hic neglexerit, cum obierit apud dominum promereri. Non igitur ista quae pro defunctis commendandis frequentat ecclesia, illi apostolicae sunt adversa sententiae quo dictum est: Omnes enim adstabimus ante tribunal Christi ut referat unusquisque secundum ea quae per corpus gessit, sive bonum sive malum; quia etiam hoc meritum sibi quisque dum in corpore viveret comparavit, ut ei possint ista prodesse. Non enim omnibus prosunt. Et quare non omnibus prosunt, nisi propter differentiam vitae quam quisque gessit in corpore? Cum ergo sacrificia, sive altaris sive quarumcumque eleemosynarum, pro babptizatis defunctis omnibus offeruntur, pro volde bonis gratiarum actiones sunt, pro

non valde bonis propitiationes sunt, pro valde malis etiam si nulla sunt adiumenta mortuorum qualescumque vivorum consolationes sunt. Quibus autem prosunt, aut ad hoc prosunt ut sit plena remissio, aut certe ut tolerabilior fiat ipsa damnatio. (Enchir., XXIX, 110; C.C. XLVI, 108).

203 Enchir, XXIX, 110; Conf., IX, 13; De VIII Quaest. ad Dulcit., Q.2, 4; Serm. 172. 2; Serm., 239.

204 Sunt enim quos nihil omnino adiuvant ista, sive pro eis fiant quorum tam mala sunt merita, ut nec talibus digni sint adiuvari, sive pro eis quorum tam bona, ut talibus non indigeant adiumentis. (De VIII Quaest. ad Dulcit., Q. 2, 3; C.C. XLIV (A) 272.)

205 Neque negandum est defunctorum animas pietate suorum viventium relevari, cum pro illis sacrificium offertur vel elemosinae in ecclesia fiunt. Sed eis haec prosunt qui cum viverent haec sibi, ut postea possent prodesse, meruerunt.(idem 2,4.)

206 Nam qui sine fide quae per dilectionem operatur, eiusque Sacramentis, de corporibus exierunt, frustra illis a suis huiusmodi pietatis impenduntur officia (Serm,172,2;P.L,XXXVIII. 937.)

207 De Civ. Dei XXI, 24.

208 Ep.,130,14.

209 De VIII Quaest. ad Dulcit., Q.2,3.

210 Enchir.,XXIX.110 ; cf., Ep.,22,6.

211 See above n.86.

212 see De Sancta Virginitate 3,5. On the gradual inclusion of other saints into the category previously limited to martyrs, see above n.84.

213 Enchir.,XXIX,110.

214 De VIII Quaest. ad Dulcit.,Q.2,3.

215 Serm., 159,1; 284,5 ;285,5 ;297,2,3.

216
Ideo quippe ad ipsam mensam non sic eos commemoramus, quemadmodum alios qui in pace requiescunt, ut etiam pro eis oremus, sed magis ut ipsi pro nobis, ut eorum vestigiis adhaereamus; quia impleurunt ipsi caritatem qua Dominus dixit non posse esse maiorem.(In Evang. Ioan. Tr.84. 1; C.C.,XXXVI.537.)

217
Serm.,159,1.

218
Martyrum perfecta iustitia est, quoniam in ipsa passione perfecti sunt. Ideo pro illis in Ecclesia non oratur. Pro aliis fidelibus defunctis oratur, pro martyribus non oratur: tam enim perfecti exierunt, ut non sint suscepti nostri, sed advocati. Neque hoc in se, sed in illo cui capiti perfecta membra cohaeserunt. Ille est enim vere advocatus unus qui interpellat pro nobis, sedens ad dexteram Patris: sed advocatus unus, sicut et pastor unus ... Ut Christus pastor, Petrus non pastor? Imo et Petrus pastor, et caeteri tales sine ulla dubitatione pastores,(Serm.285,5; P.L.,XXXVIII,1295; cf., serm.,273,7.)

219
Serm., 325,1.

220
Contra Faustum,XX,21.An assessment of the western emphasis on merit and the creation of a superfluity of merit amongst the saints whereby they are able to perform works supererogation has already been made at the end of the previous section.

221
De Cura pro mortuis ger.,4.

222
Iam non ponit aurem ad os meum, sed spiritale os ad fontem tuum et bibit, quantum potest, sapientam pro auiditate sua sine fine felix. Nec eum sic arbitror inebriari ex ea, ut obliuiscatur mei, cum tu, domine, quem potat ille, nostri sis memor. (Conf.,IX,3;CSEL.,XXXIII,201.)

223
De Cura pro mortuis ger., 16.

224
Augustine's argument here formed the basis of later thought on the question of the knowledge of the saints of our condition. Some argued that they possessed an idiopatheia, that is, a particular aquaintance with our necessities and distresses. Others argued that they possessed only a sympatheia,in other words, a general knowledge derived from the Word of God and their own experience. See on this differentiation,A.M.Allchin, 'The Communion of Saints,' Christian 2 (1975)p.373.

225 Quamquam ista quaestio vires intellegentiae meae vincit, quemadmodum opitulentur martyres his, quos per eos certum est adiuuari: utrum ipsi per se ipsos adsint uno tempore tam diversis locis et tanta inter se longinquitate discretis, sive ubi sunt eorum memoriae sive praeter suas memorias,ubicumque adesse sentiuntur, an ipsis in loco suis meretis congruo ab omni mortalium conversatione remotis et tamen generaliter orantibus pro indigentia supplicantum - sicut nos oramus pro mortuis, quibus utique non praesentamur nec ubi sint vel quid agant scimus - deus omnipotens, qui est ubique praesens ... exaudiens martyrum preces, per angelica ministeria usquequaque diffusa praebeat hominibus ista solacia, quibus in huius vitae miseria iudicat esse praebenda, et suorum martyrum merita ubi vult, quando vult, quomodo vult, maximeque per eorum memorias, quoniam hoc novit expedire nobis ad aedificandam fidem Christi, pro cuius illi confessione sunt passi, mirabili atque ineffabili potestate ac bonitate commendet. Res est haec altior, quam ut a me possit adtingi, et abstrusior, quam ut a me valeat perscrutari. Et ideo quid horum duorum sit, an vero fortassis utrumque sit, ut aliquando ista fiant per ipsam praesentiam martyrum, aliquando per angelos suscipientes personam martyrum, definire non audeo. Mallem ab scientibus ista perquirere. Neque enim nemo est, qui haec sciat, non qui sibi scire videatur et nesciat. (De Cura pro mortuis ger.,20;CSEL,XLI 653)

226 Faustus had asserted that Catholic worship was merely an adaptation of the pagan cultus: 'sacrificia vero eorum vertistis in agapes, idola in martyres, quos votis similibus colitis; defunctorum umbras vino placatis et dapibus, sollemnes gentium dies cum ipsis celebratis, ut Kalendas et solistifia. De vita certe mutastis nihil; estis sane schisma a matrice sua diversum nihil habens nisi conventum.' (C. Faustum XX, 4; CSEL XXV (i), 538).

227 Populus autem christianus memorias martyrum religiosa sollemnitate concelebrat et ad excitandam imitationem et ut meritis eorum consocietur atque orationibus adiuuetur, ita tamen, ut nulli martyrum, sed ipsi deo martyrum quamvis in memoris martyrum constituamus ataria. Quis enim antistum, in locis sanctorum corporum adsistens altari aliquando dixit: offerimus tibi, Petre aut Paule aut Cypriane, sed quod offertur, offertur deo, qui martyres coronavit .... colimus ergo martyres eo cultu dilectionis et societatis, quo et in hac vita coluntur sancti homines dei, quorum cor ad talem pro evangelica veritate passionem paratum esse sentimus ... at illo cultu, quae grace λατρεία dicitur, latine uno verbo dici non potest, cum sit quaedam proprie divinitati debita servitus, nec colimus nec colendum docemos nisi unum deum (ibid., XX, 21; CSEL, XXV (i), 562).

228 From the writings of Augustine alone we know of not less than twenty martyrs' basilicas in Carthage, and this number represents

only the minimum, which was certainly surpassed by the actual number. This fact in itself indicates the esteem and popularity of the cult of the martyrs which was exceptionally developed in Africa. Excavations have, furthermore, confirmed in a most convincing manner what Augustine says in one of his letters, namely that 'all Africa is full of holy bodies' (Ep. 78, 3). It would seem that even during the period of persecution small monuments called cellae or memoriae (martyrum), had been built over the graves of famous martyrs. Such monuments were already common among the pagans. There was little space in the subterranean corridors or passages for any fitting monument, so the larger monuments were built over them in the open air. And with the Constantinian Peace these modest monuments were transformed, sometimes into magnificent basilicas such as those built by Constantine himself in Rome.

229 That the invocation of martyrs in prayer was an unquestionably common practice by the time of Augustine is apparent from the wealth of evidence available to us. In fact, the faithful of his time would seem to have had an almost limitless faith and confidence in their intercessory power. This may be demonstrated by an examination of the graffiti which were scratched on the walls near the martyrs' graves. For example, in the cemetry of Priscilla there is the petition Salba Me Domne Crescentione Meam Lucs ... ('Lord Crescentio, heal my eyes for me!'). Similarly under the basilica of St. Sebastian in Rome, excavations have revealed a wall almost wholly covered with graffiti invoking the intercession of the apostles Peter and Paul. Inscriptions have been found in Greek and Latin: 'Paul and Peter, pray for Victor'; 'Paul, Peter, pray for Eratus'; 'Peter and Paul, protect your servants'. (Examples taken from J.A. Jungmann, The Early Liturgy, E.T., London 1960 p.182, who cites as his authority C.O. Marucchi, Le catacombe romane, Rome 1934, pp. 261 - 5).

230 Similar reasoning was often attached to the pious practice of burial near the graves of the martyrs - a practice which Augustine considered to be theologically more dubious. It was common practice to purchase a grave (either for oneself or for a relative) close to the vault of a martyr. People seemed to have liked to have had their graves as near to such a vault as possible, to lie side by side with the saint, ad sanctos or retro sanctos. (For evidence of this practice see Van Der Meer, op. cit., p.492f.) The idea seemed to be that if, in death, one lay near the martyr, one would be close to the martyr also on the great day of the resurrection. This popular belief, verging as it did almost on superstition, was combatted by the bishops, the cause being championed by Augustine. In reply to Paulinus of Nola who had asked for advice on this matter, Augustine had to point out with emphasis that it was not physical nearness to a martyr's remains that assured salvation, but imitation of his life and virtues. He did concede that the memoria of a martyr may

help to freshen the memoria of those who visit it, and as a consequence pray better at such a spot than in some other place. If a mother has her child buried near a saint and really believes that the merits of the saint can help her child, then this belief may in itself constitute a silent prayer. (De Curo Pro Mortuis Gerenda 4, 5). Nevertheless, he insists that the effectiveness of the prayer is not dependent on its being made in this place, and it can be just as well made at home and may be just as good a prayer if so made. Augustine had by then learned to think of this matter as his own mother had thought of it. In dying she had no thought of her resting-place: all that mattered was that she should be remembered at the altar. So too for Augustine; for him the place of burial was of no consequence, all that mattered was prayer.

231 The incredible expansion in the cult of relics that occurred during this period is but another example of popular enthusiasm and excess in the veneration of the martyrs. Reverence for the bodies of the holy martyrs had been displayed from the first, much in the same way as reverence was shown for the body of Jesus himself. The Martyrium Polycarpi already cited in a previous chapter, provides us with the first clear record of the mind of the faithful in this matter. But as Jungmann points out (op. cit., p.185) it is apparent that the relics of martyrs were soon cherished by many not simply as keepsakes or mementos, but as a protection, a munimentum. For example, on the occasion of the struggle of Perpetua, Felicitas and their companions in the arena in 203, we find the martyr Saturus dipping the ring of the soldier Padens in his own blood and handing it back to him as a pignus and a memoria sanguinis (Mart. Perp. et Fel., 21, 3). With the cessation of the persecutions the faithful were able to celebrate the victory of the martyrs with unrestricted joy, and it would appear that the enthusiasm so generated shielded some abuses. In Africa as elsewhere people became discontent with venerating the graves of local saints, and became anxious to acquire the memoriae of foreign saints as well. The possibility of satisfying this desire arose when the practice of dividing up the bodies of saints and making gifts of relics was introduced in the East, each fragment being thought to possess the same virtue as the whole body itself. In the West this practice was for a time frowned upon. In Rome especially, it was a principle, protected by law, that graves were not to be disturbed, that corpses were not to be exhumed without special permission nor transferred to another place. Resistance was minimal in Africa, however, and the custom quickly became established. One result was the rapid multiplication of the memoriae to such an extent that the boundary between the grave proper of many a saint and his votive grave began to disappear. Furthermore, the popularity of this form of piety could not fail to encourage frauds resorted to for the sake of gain. The abuse became

so widespread that a canon of the Carthaginian Synod of 401, which was repeated word for word in 438 (a few years after Augustine's death) enjoined the bishops in the following words to put an end to it.

> The altars which have been erected everywhere in fields and by the wayside, and of which it cannot be proved that they contain a body or a relic, are to be destroyed by whatever bishop exercises ecclesiastical authority over the place concerned. If this cannot be carried out without arousing a popular tumult, bishops should warn the faithful not to visit these places, so that men of good will may no longer be superstitiously attached to them, and not a single memoria should be regarded as being even probably genuine, unless a body or relics of unquestionable authenticity are to be found at such a place, or unless there is at least a tradition that is worthy of belief concerning their resting place, ownership and passion. Above all, the bishops should put a stop to the practice that now obtains of erecting altars on the strength of dreams, and alleged revelations vouchsafed to all kinds of simple people.
>
> (Council of Carthage 438. Canon 14).

In spite of these injunctions the large number of isolated memoriae which excavations have revealed would seem to indicate that they most certainly did not all disappear at once. In most cases, however, there are no means of ascertaining whether the mensae (the simple tables of stone shaped in the form of a sigma) that have been found actually served as altars, nor, unless there is an actual inscription (the names of those saints whose graves or relics they covered were usually inscribed just as they were inscribed on the mosaic floors of the churches) have we any means of knowing whether they were used in connection with the veneration of martyrs or merely in the customary family cult of graveside feasts (see Van der Meer, pp. 483 & n.75).

232 For particular details on which saints were venerated generally and locally see Jungmann, p.179., and Van der Meer, pp.475 - 8. From the earliest times Christianity had created an entirely new atmosphere around the grave, and as far back as the second century the church was causing the Eucharist to displace the deliberate or implicit offering of a sacrifice to the supposed shade of the departed. Consequently it is the opinion of Jungmann (op.cit., p.179) that the liturgical celebration of a martyr's death was from the first eucharistic. This he traces back with certainty to Tertullian (De Cor., 3). A later development in the feast of martyrs was introduction of a vigil preceding the eucharist. By the time of Augustine it seems that just as at Easter, so on a martyr's feast, the greater part of the town would assemble at the grave for common prayer. Holy Scripture would be read and also the Passio of

the martyr, in small sections. Each section would be followed by a prayer, or by a song and a prayer. Jerome certainly makes mention of these vigils (in basilicis martyrum) and sort they take place quite often (Contra Vig., 9). But both the custom of holding these vigils and the perils connected with the practice must have been recognized very early. At the Council of Elvira in Spain which was held about 305, a special regulation was promulgated forbidding women to hold vigils in cemetries because of the outrages that were sometimes committed! (Canon 35) The highpoint of the vigil (at least of the public vigil held on the anniversary) was the celebration of the Eucharist at the grave of the martyr. Here is to be recognized the genuine ecclesiastical conception of the veneration of the martyrs. For in the later Roman sacramentaries and in other liturgical books, a great number of eucharistic formularies are preserved which probably date from this time, each appointed for the feast of a martyr at the respective basilica. At the beginning the eucharist was probably not celebrated very differently from on other occasions. Indeed, the Eastern Church retained this practice until quite late; only the lessons and hymns were specially selected for each individual feast. But in the West and especially at Rome, the commemoration of the martyr influenced the main eucharistic prayer. (For examples see Jungmann p.180). In the course of the fifth and sixth centuries, the names of martyrs came to be inserted into the prayers Communicantes and Nobis quoque, thus giving expression 'to the desire to offer the eucharistic sacrifice in union not only with the whole Church on earth but with the Church triumphant in heaven.' (ibid). See also Srawley, The Early History of the Liturgy, Cambridge 1957, pp.137, 204f.

233 The high plains of Numidia were never so thoroughly Romanized as the coastline. There the indigenous population of Berber-speaking peasants, often ignorant of Latin, stubbornly refused to be transformed into subjects of the Roman Empire in anything but name. It was of course in these areas that the power of Donatism lay. Gerald Bonner (op.cit., p.115 ff., & 'The Extinction of Paganism and the Church Historian,' unpublished art.,) and W.H.C. Frend (The Donatist Church, Oxford 1952, p.174f) have both commented on the strange relationship that existed between this movement and Berber folk-piety. For we find the custom of feasting at the tombs particularly prevalent in Donatist circles which is interesting considering that they were by first principles fanatically hostile to Paganism. It is also interesting to note that the Circumcellians, the physical force group of Donatism, derived their name from the fact that they lived circum cellas - 'around the shrines' of the martyrs from which they received their food, and were consequently notorious for their ritual drunkeness. See also on Donatism: W.H.C. Frend, 'Heresy and Schism as Social and national movements,' in Schism, Heresy and Religious Protest, ed., Derek Baker, Cambridge 1972, pp. 37 - 56; R.A. Markus, 'Christianity and dissent in Roman North Africa: changing perspectives in recent work.' (ibid., pp. 21 - 36.)

234 In this I am indebted to the observations of Mr. Andrew Walmisley who during 1975/6 made a study (unpublished) of the funerary customs maintained in Tunisia. For example, he has noted that regularly on Thursday or Friday nights (the Moslem 'sabbath') female relatives of the deceased visit the village cemetries and leave food on the white-washed tombs for their dead. This usually consists of a few crusts of bread and some dried olives. Apparently this food is meant 'to feed the dead' in some way. Furthermore, in addition to these weekly visits to the graves there are also certain 'feast-days' of the dead when all the village women veiled in their customary white 'sefsari' visit the cemetries and put food on all the tombs. These days come as a welcome break in the routine for Tunisian women and are regarded as a social event and regularly become an occasion for relaxing and gossipping with friends. The parallel between this and the fourth century practice of feasting the dead needs hardly to be drawn.

Another distinctive and fascinating aspect of Tunisian and indeed, of North African custom is the cult of 'Marabouts'. The Marabouts were usually great mystical teachers of the 'Sufi' sect who propagated an Islam deeply influenced by Christian mysticism and monasticism. These Marabouts in their lives attracted large followings and when they died their tombs were often richly embellished and became centres of prayer and pilgrimage. In this way they have become the centre of great devotion among the populace being in the opinion of Walmisley, 'more at the heart of popular religion than the classical Islam propagated at the mosques.' In fact, many of the Marabouts should not even be accorded the status of holy men as many were just local heroes or worse, bandits. The white-domed tombs called 'Zawias' are everywhere in North Africa and constitute a most distinctive feature of the landscape. They may be found in the remotest places and proliferate in every city. Every city, town and village boasts its patron saint, usually called 'Sidi' so and so. The folk patron of Tunisia is Sidi Mausour, and one of the great patrons of Tunis is Sidi Mahrez. The latter's tomb is a great centre of pilgramage for the Tunisois. It is a large double-domed building. Under the first dome there are two tombs of minor saints. The tombs are surrounded by wrought-ion railings and covered with banners. Under the sacred dome is the great tomb of the saint himself which is invariably surrounded by supplicants entreating his prayers. (He is supposed to be especially efficacious for women in matrimonial matters and fertility). The pilgrims also bring much food with them for the saint - and not just bread and olives but great dishes of cous-cous (the national dish). Once again the similarity between fourth century and twentieth century practice is remarkable, the only apparent difference being the replacement of Christian martyrs by Moslem heroes!

One further similarity in funerary custom is to be noted in the desire to be buried near the tomb of a Marabout. In the view of Walmisley this is a custom which is now in decline and is certainly confined to remoter villages. Nevertheless it was common practice until very recently for each family to use the tomb of its own special saint as a kind of family mausoleum so that they were buried near the holy man. As such this represents yet another close parallel to fourth century custom. The combined testimony of these various devotions witnesses to the strength and reality of folk religion in North Africa and emphasises its rather nominal association with Christian practice.

235 Johannes Quasten, '"Vetus Superstitio et Nova Religio" The Problem of Refrigerium in the ancient church of North Africa', HTR XXXIII (1940) p. 256.

236 See c.3 n.19.

237 In Augustine's day the third and seventh days were still the customary ones for a visit to the grave, and sometimes the thirtieth and the fortieth day (see Ep. 158. 2) and the anniversary were still held in honour. Augustine himself would have nothing to do with the ninth day because both the novemdialia and the parentalia were of nine days duration and the figure nine, tended thus to be given a pagan flavour. He recommended the seventh day which was observed by good Christians by reason of its being a symbol of rest, and the third day in memory of the resurrection, (see Jungmann, pp.142 - 4).

238 One of the most famous examples of paganized Christianity is that of a tomb in Timgad which is most probably that of the Donatist bishop Optatus (d. c.370) who was Bishop of Milevis. The tomb contains a hole pierced in the grave-slab to enable offerings of wine to be poured into the mouth of the corpse below. Commenting on the significance of the tomb, H.I. Marrou writes, 'ne faut-il pas s'étonner de voir ce vieux rite païen survivre en Afrique, au Ve siècle, en pleine époque chrétienne? Et non seulement survivre, mais s'affirmer publiquement, s'afficher au coeur d'un grand sanctuaire!' ('Survivances païennes dans les rites funéraires des donafistes,' in Hommages à Joseph Bidez et à Franz Cumont, Brussels 1955, p.196)

239 see above n.233.

240 Quasten, p. 257.

241 Conf., VI ii. 2.

242 Serm. 310. 2.

243 Ep. 29 See Bonner, op.cit., p.116 ff.

244 Furthermore Ambrose simply had no sympathy with the tradition of family feasts. He knew that in many cases they were kept within very modest bounds but his advice was that such people should rather give alms directly to the poor and that instead of bringing food they would do better to come to church with a heart full of prayers (Ambrose, De Hel. et Jejun., 17, 62)

245 It is Quasten's opinion that the order of reasons given is not accidental. (Quasten, p.259). He considers the intemperance which often followed the meals at the martyrs' tombs to be the main reason. Except for this Ambrose might perhaps have come to terms with the second objection, that the pagans venerated their dead in a similar manner. The more dominant thought was that of commemorating the dead piously in accordance with old family customs. It is therefore likely that the second reason was added in order better to justify the comprehensiveness of the prohibition, which was issued for 'all, even for those who followed it with moderation.' If the second reason had been basic Quasten argues that it would be necessary to ask why the pagan origin of this custom did not hurt Christian feelings earlier.

246 p.472. In the words of Augustine himself: magis docendo quam iubendo, magis monendo quam minando.

247 See Gerald Bonner, op. cit., pp. 115 - 20; Jungmann, op. cit., p.140 ff.; Van der Meer, op. cit., pp. 483 - 97,515-26; Quasten, op. cit., pp. 253-66.

248 Augustine's proposals for reform corresponds in large measure to his understanding of the place and value of customs in the life of the church. Some customs he admitted were quite pagan in origin, and many others were inessential, which meant that as far as he was concerned they were ipso facto superfluous (Ep.55). For example, in the second book of his Christian Knowledge, in which he examines the value of the various human activities, he summarily says 'What has been instituted by man is sometimes superstition and sometimes not.' And whatever belongs to superstition must be rooted out according to Augustine. Human institutions which do not partake of superstition may be divided into those which are useful and even necessary, and those which are superfluous (De Doctrina Christiana II 19); and within the church Augustine looks upon all that is superfluous as inadmissible. He is particularly anxious to cut off without hesitation 'all those customs the meaning of which has been lost and which differ from one place to another;' and yet

because this is not always possible, they are for the present permitted to endure, 'for the Church is tolerant of much.' (Ep. 55)

249 Sed quoniam istae in cimiteriis ebrietates et luxuriosa convivia non solum honores martyrum a carnali et inperita plebe credi solent, sed etiam solatia mortuorum, mihi videtur facilius illis dissuaderi posse istam foeditatem ac turpitudinem, si et de scripturis prohibeatur et oblationes pro spiritibus dormientium, quas vere aliquid adiuvare credendum est, super ipsas memorias non sint sumptuosae atque omnibus petentibus sine typho et cum alacritate praebeantur neque vendantur; sed si quis pro religione aliquid pecuniae offerre voluerit, in prae senti pauperibus eroget. Ita ne deserere videbuntur memorias suorum, quod potest gignere non levem cordis dolorem, et id celebrabitur in ecclesia, quod pie honesteque celebratur. (Ep. 22. 6; CSEL XXXIV 58., cf. De Civit Dei 8. 27).

250 A. D. Nock, 'Cremation and Burial in the Roman Empire,' HTR XXV (1932) p. 332.

251 E. R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational (Sather Classical Lectures vol. 25), Univ. of California Press: Berkley & Los Angeles 1951, p.244.

252 Vincent of Lérins, Comm., 2, 3.

253 I am aware of the ambiguities surrounding the concept of doctrinal development as expounded, for example, by Maurice Wiles, The Making of Christian Doctrine, Cambridge 1967; The Re-making of Christian Doctrine, London 1974, pp. 1 - 19. cf., R.P.C. Hanson, Tradition in the Early Church, London 1962.

254 Jerome, Vigil., 5; PL XXIII 343.

255 Gregory the Great, Mor., 17, 29, 43 .

256 Jaroslav Pelikan, Historical Theology: Continuity and Change, Philadelphia 1971 p.335

257 op.cit., p.338 .

258 Augustine, C. Faustum XI, 2; CSEL XXV (i), 315

259 Vincent of Lérins, Comm., 2, 3.

260 Prosper, Auct., 8; PL LI 209

261 Pelikan (p.351) quotting Seeberg.

262 B. J. Kidd, quoted by G. Lacey May. 'Dual Attitude to Death', CQR 155 (1954) p. 264

263 Sed tamen de quibusdam levibus culpis esse ante iudicium purgaturius ignis credendus est. (Gregory, Dial., IV 41; GMD IV 296)

264 Full text: Quamvis hoc de igne tribulationis in hac nobis vita adhibito possit intellegi, tamen, si quis haec de igne futurae purgationis accipiat, pensandum sollicite est quia illum dixit per ignem posse salvari, non qui super hoc fundamentum ferrum, aes vel plumbum aedificat, id est peccata maiora et idcirco duriora, adque tunc iam insolubilia, sed ligna foenum stipula, id est peccata minima adque levissima, quae ignis facile consumat. Hoc tamen sciendum est, quia illic saltim de minimis nil quisque purgationis obtinebit, nisi bonis hoc actibus, in hoc adhuc vita positus, ut illic obteneat, promereatur. (ibid).

265 There is no time to enter into a discussion of Gregory's understanding of the penitential system. Suffice it to say that integral to his whole theology in this matter was his contention that there can be no sin without punishment. God is seen pre-eminently as the avenger of sin. This inevitably had repercussions for a theology of purgatory given that there were some who died not entirely free from sin. See on this, F. Homes Dudden, Gregory the Great, New York 1965 (ii) pp.419 - 30.

266 op. cit., p.427

267 Wiles, The Making of Christian Doctrine, Cambridge 1967 p.53

268 Quia enim non malitia, sed ignorantiae errore peccaverat, purgari post mortem potuit a peccato. (Dial., IV 42; GMD IV 300).

269 Dial., IV 26.

270 Sicut enim hi qui adhuc viventes sunt mortuorum animae quo loco habeantur ignorant, ita mortui vita in carne viventium post eos qualiter disponatur nesciunt, quia et vita spiritus longe est a vita carnis. Et sicut corporea atque incorporea diversa sunt genere, ita etiam distincta cognitione. Quod tamen de animabus sanctis sentiendum non est, quia quae intus omnipotentis Dei claritatem vident nullo modo credendum est quia foris sit aliquid quod ignorent. (Moral., XII 26; SC CCXll, 186)

271 Hos ergo, Fratres carissimi, in causa vestri examinis, quam cum districto iudice habentis, patronos facite, hos in die tanti terroris illius defensores adhibete. Certe si apud quemdam magnum iudicem causa quaelibet vestra esset die crastino ventilanda, totus hodiernus dies in cogitatione duceretur, patronum vestra fraternitas quaereret, magis precibus ageret ut apud tantum iudicem sibi defensor veniret. Ecce districtus iudex Iesus venturus est, tanti illius archangelorumque concilli terror adhibetur. In illo conventu causa nostra discutitur, et tamen nos patronos modo non quaerimus, quos tune defensores habeamus. Adsunt defensores nostri sancti martyres, rogari volunt, atque, ut ita dixerim, quaerunt, ut quaerantur. Hos ergo adiutores vestrae orationis quaerite, hos protectores vestri reatus invenite, quia ne punire peccatores debeat, rogari vult et ipse qui iudicat. (Hom. in Eu., XXXII 8; PL LXXVI 1238)

272 With the acceptance of the doctrine of purgatory, the whole system of devotions connected with death and burial took shape in the Medieval Church, and it is not surprising that the atmosphere of peace and hope and triumph which had characterised early Christian liturgy should have been exchanged for one of gloomy apprehension. Broadly speaking, the sense of personal sin had always been more deeply felt in the West than in the East. The Eastern was painfully conscious of his limitations, the Western of his shortcomings. This difference was soon accentuated, seen for example, in the greater frequency and insistence with which even in the Gelasian formulas, when the dead are prayed for there is mention of sin, and forgiveness, and cleansing, of escaping the place of punishment and the fire of hell and the ways of darkness, and the like. (see also: Leonine Sacramentary, prayers Quaesumus Domine miserationum; ut devolio paenitentiae; Gregorian Sacramentary, prayer Satisfaciat tibi, Domine.) As time went on, the tone of Western prayers for the dead become sadder and sterner; this is inevitable when one considers that purgatory was conceived of as a place of punishment whose tortures differed from those of hell only in not being eternal - poenas esse atrocissimas, et cum illis nullas poenas huius vitae comparandas. (Bellarmine, De Purgatorio ii. 14). It may be conceded that the popular belief concerning purgatory does not display itself in Medieval liturgy to the degree that might be expected. The Latin service-books show restraint. Even so, there is always a darker shade in Western prayers, typified in the opening antiphon of Sarum order for the burial of the dead, which is not 'I am the Resurrection and the Life,' but 'The sorrows of death compassed me round about, and the pains of hell surrounded me.'

273 Singulariter namque ad absolutionem nostram oblata cum lacrymis et benignitate mentis sacri altaris hostia suffragatur, quia is qui in se resurgens a mortuis iam non moritur,

adhuc per hanc in suo mysterio pro nobis iterum patitur. Nam quoties ei hostiam suae passionis offerimus, toties nobis ad absolutionem nostram passionem illius reparamus. (Hom. in Eu., XXXVII 7 ; PL LXXVI 1279)

274 Si culpae post mortem insolubiles non sunt, multum solet animas etiam post mortem sacra oblatio hostiae salutaris adiuvare; ita ut hanc nonnunquam ipsae defunctorum animae videantur expetere. (Dial., IV 57 ; GMD IV 315).

275 Dial., IV 60. This of course reflects the threefold distinction Gregory makes between the perfectly righteous, the imperfectly righteous and the perfectly wicked. The perfectly righteous are at death received immediately into heaven and enjoy the full vision of God before the judgment. (Dial., IV 26 ; Moral., IV 56, XIII 53, XXIV 34) They are in no need of the saving help of the eucharist. The perfectly wicked similarly, are at death immediately cast into hell. (Dial., IV 28, 44) Hence, they are outside its efficacy. The imperfectly righteous, however, being in purgatory have need of the sacramental grace.

276 Dial., IV 42.

277 ibid., 57.

278 ibid., 54.

279 Though we may perhaps see the way things are going even in the last years of Augustine's life, when he is impressed by miracles worked by the relics of St. Stephen. As Peter Brown has remarked (Augustine of Hippo, London 1967, p.416), 'like most Late Antique men, Augustine was credulous without necessarily being superstitious.' The same may be said of Gregory.

280 Benedicta Ward, 'Miracles and History : A Reconsideration of the Miracle Stories used by Bede,' in Famulus Christi, ed., Gerald Bonner, London 1976, p.71. See also on this subject: 'Bede the Scholar,' op.cit., pp. 51 - 5 ; J.A. MacCulloch, Early Christian Visions of the Other-World, Edinburgh 1912.

C O N C L U S I O N

CONCLUSION

In the course of this survey of the evolution of early Christian thought about the state of the departed, it has been found possible to trace the development of a trajectory of the images of sleep, rest and waiting, and language relating to the individual departing 'to be with Christ' from their uncertain position in the framework of the New Testament where they would appear to command a functional status, designating respectively the corporate destiny which was deemed to await the entire people of God, living and departed, and an individual's confident expectation of immediate union with God at death; through to their eventual fusion and emergence as an autonomous theological concept referring to a necessary state of preparation after death for the new order to be inaugurated at the end of time. It was this intermediate state which came to be formulated in terms of a 'purgatory' in the Western tradition and which was, of course, subject to extensive embellishment by punitive exposition in Medieval theology.

From one stance, the rationalisation of the Church's understanding of man's situation before God in the face of death and in expectation of personal and corporate fulfilment in the life to come, was a product of pastoral necessity: the development of a framework which attempted to meet the needs of ordinary people as they came to terms with bereavement, articulated their grief and their hopes, and faced the inevitability of their own death. Pastoral necessity provided the initial impetus for the development, sustained its momentum, and continued to provide its rationale. Beyond this, however, the demands of theological expediency also prompted the movement towards codification. There was an urgent need to resolve, or at least to accommodate, the tensions resulting from the delay of the Parousia and the apparent inconsistency of language relating to the judgement of an individual after death and statements concerning the general judgement at the Last Day. In this respect the growth of thought around questions relating to the state of the faithful departed has been found to constitute but a facet of the wider

development in Christian doctrine and to this end, a variety of historical, cultural, liturgical and ecclesiastical factors have been examined for their formative influence upon the Christian tradition.

Whatever the merits in the process of rationalisation, and however the ideals of the early Church be assessed or its achievements be ultimately evaluated, it is clear from analysis of the whole complex of theological discourse about death and the after-life that confusion as well as clarity is to be discerned in the pattern of doctrinal development. Tangential speculation as well as deepening insight has been discovered in the process of theological exploration. It is not the function of this addendum to rehearse yet again the complexities of six hundred years' thought and questionings, or to repeat criticisms which have already been established. For one thing it would be idle to attempt to compress multum in parvo. Yet the logic of this doctrinal survey, not being exclusively antiquarian in interest, would seem to warrant some sort of condensation and application of what has gone before to the needs of today. Certainly if we are to learn anything from the successes and failures of earlier generations to aid us in our quest for meaningful discourse in the face of death, then this is of crucial importance.

Today it would not be an exaggeration to say that what troubles man more than the problem of life after death, is death itself; or to be more specific, the process of dying. What is hard is not simply the dying, but the living - the living until you die. As one patient whom I had the privilege of nursing through her terminal illness, once said to me: 'Death may get to be a routine to you, but it is new to me. You may not see me as unique, but I've never died before.' What is death? What is this stange event which awaits us and which in the ' civilised' West has come to be associated with either the slow corruption of a body in the cemetery or the swift consumption in the crematorium? And what is the appropriate method for investigating death and its significance for us? Indeed, can any method be appropriate to so impossibly

vast and mysterious a subject? These are the questions being asked today and to which theologians must address themselves, for they are logically prior to any discussion of the meaning of post-mortem existence. The questions are not trite. They are necessary ones for Christians to answer for this is the confused situation in which we find ourselves and in which language is being sought adequate both to the confidence of the Christian's expectations and to the partiality of his present understanding when confronted by death.

Philosophically, the case of death presents us with a unique situation.[1] As Wittgenstein once commented, 'Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death.' Death is totally excluded from our experience. The term defines the cessation of existence and of all experience at least as far as can be scientifically demonstrable. Yet if death in this sense be said to be totally excluded from our experience, in another sense, it may be claimed that it is most intimate to it. Dom Sebastian Moore writes:

> Death, as a subject for thought, is obviously unique. For if any subject for thought must be an object of experience, death is an object of experience in a unique and puzzling way. The datum is, it seems, unavoidably divided: between the fact of death as we experience it and the certain knowledge that this thing, which we see going on around us, awaits us.[2]

As a 'phenomenon of delimitation'[3] then, death, at one and the same time, both lies within our knowledge and also strangely goes beyond it. Thus much may truly be said about death without touching the mystery that enshrouds it. For example, in that it constitutes an event designating the termination of life as we know it, death presents itself for the observation of all. We know something of the meaning of death to the extent in which the processes of dying are evident to us and such knowledge is the special concern of the biologist and the doctor.[4] They are able to recognise, for example, what biological phenomena mark the onset of death, what are its concomitants and what follows in its wake. They are able to observe that at a certain point in time in a given individual, the circulation of the blood will stop, the respiratory system will

collapse and neurological activity will cease. The organism, thereafter, ceases to yield any signs which we associate with life, especially those in which man reveals himself as a person, and when this point is reached it is commonly conceded that death has occurred. From that moment, a series of processes sets in, the term of which is the disintegration of the functional unity of the once living organism and the putrefaction of the body.

Comparative physiology further establishes that human death is no exception, but on the contrary, the rule, the confirmation of the general law of nature that all living organisms must sooner or later die.[5] Indeed this is a primary factor to which the Christian tradition in its understanding of death has directed attention. One need only quote the words of Isaiah in this respect:

> All flesh is grass,
> And all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
> The grass withers, the flower fades,
> When the breath of the LORD blows upon it.
> (Is.40 : 6, 7)

Viewed in isolation this might appear platitudinous and seem only to point to the conclusion that the death of man <u>is</u> a purely natural phenomenon to which no mystery should be attached. Indeed, it has been contended that this is an opinion common to all the great religions of the world. John Hick, for example, in the preface to his book <u>Death and Eternal Life</u>,[6] relates the story of a mother whose small son had died, and who came in despair to the Buddha to beg him miraculously to restore the boy to life. He told her to go round the town collecting mustard seeds, but only from houses in which no one had ever died. In house after house however she found that there had at some time been a death. When she came back she had no mustard seeds, but she had instead a deeper realisation and acceptance of the inescapable universality of death.

That this is a realisation from which we all have to start is not to be denied. But as this survey has displayed, there is more to the Christian understanding of death than the mere acquaintanceship with a universal phenomenon, because the message of faith on this point is actually addressed, in the first instance,

to each person as an individual, as a truth which expresses the ultimate significance of their existence.[7] If many things in life are uncertain, even if everything is uncertain, death at least is certain. To refer back to St. Augustine, '*Incerta omnia, sola mors certa.*' Everything can be taken from us including life itself. No one can take death from us; death is an inalienable part of us. And it is precisely in this context that the Christian proclamation has been found to declare that just as birth designates the beginning of life, so death marks not the cessation of existence, but a new beginning. Hence the New Testament affirmation: 'As in Adam all die; even so shall all in Christ be made alive' (I Cor. 15 : 22), or that of T.S. Eliot: 'In my end is my beginning.'

For the Christian, it has become apparent that although God's purpose for the physical universe might for the most part be hidden in mystery inasmuch as the relation of creation to God's final and everlasting kingdom is beyond his present possibilities of understanding, yet God's purpose for mankind has been disclosed through the Incarnation. Indeed, it is in virtue of the Incarnation that theologians have considered themselves justified in focusing attention upon man and the meaning and goal of his existence, for it is only in this context and all that the true God-man relationship means as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that they have been able to discern something of the will of God for the rest of his creation and so perceive that 'there lives the dearest freshness deep down things.'[8]

Thus, as Emil Brunner rightly points out, 'human existence is an exception in the world of living beings.' And what is more, 'man alone lives in the anticipation of death and is aware of its coming.'[9] Man alone knows that the supreme cost of living is death; and it is precisely this self-awareness that individuates him as 'man'. In fact, the more man becomes aware of the subjective nature of his being, an awareness heightened through the consideration of his own imminent death, the more his own death and the death of those around him becomes an impenetrable mystery. What he had often foreseen and, therefore, what is truly nothing new to him, suddenly becomes an object of supreme incomprehension. The death of an organism, the

physical dissolution of a functional unity, even of all that went together to make a life, that he can observe, mark and comprehend (to a limited degree). But the death of a person, a friend or relative, is something not susceptible to his human reason. But once again, it is at this point that the message of faith continues to proclaim death not as a termination of existence but as a beginning, and not as the destruction of life but as the means to its fulfilment.

Such claims are able to be made in the face of death because as has been seen, the Christian faith is based not merely upon biological considerations but on an understanding of human nature as a whole, as illuminated by the relationship of man to God. According to the Christian perspective, there is a factor in man, in his very nature, that makes it impossible for him even to escape from or do away with the necessity of dying, that makes it absolutely certain that he will always die; namely, sin. Sin and death have been intimately related in the Christian faith from the beginning,[10] to such an extent that death could be interpreted as the penalty for sin, as 'the wages of sin' Rom. 6 : 23), or as Gilbert Greshake has put it, as the 'definition of man under the power of sin.'[11] Death represents both the consequence of man's alienation from God and also the expression of the truth about this alienation. Death reveals what happens when man merely seeks to realise himself in all that he does and in all that he refuses to do: he loses his life and forfeits the right to live. However, through Christ, sin has been dealt with, and in the destruction of the power of sin, death is vanquished. Thus, the New Testament and the Fathers writing from the heart of the Church's experience were concerned to preach new life in Christ with the consummation of love into eternity.

> In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God and in Christ Jesus our Lord.
>
> (Rom. 8 : 37f)

Life and death are therefore no longer considered to be the criteria which define man's relationship to God. Jesus Christ and faith in him is the one criteria for defining that relationship. Life and death take on a new meaning, a new inter-relation for the Christian. In the words of Karl Rahner, 'death and life are no longer simply two events which follow one upon another and are distinct one from the other in human existence. They interpenetrate one another.'[12] And it is in virtue of this interpenetration that they have been given to interpret one another in the Christian tradition, for in dying to sin in union with Christ, Christians have come to participate in new life, which is considered to be the gift of God and of the order of the resurrection. In this way, death is no future enemy whose advent enchroaches upon the sovereignty of life, but a present reality which through the power of the love of God in Christ has become a qualitative definition of existence itself and the gateway to its fulfilment in God, for time and for eternity. And it is in this context that theological language about life after death or perhaps more appropriately, life through death, becomes operative:[13] not as a means of expounding the biological possibilities of such an existence or any psychic phenomena that might be accrued,[14] but rather as a means of continuing to explore the qualitative nature of the relationship still believed to subsist between man and God, and between individual and individual, as humanity grows into perfection.

Within the mainstream of the early Christian tradition four distinctive patterns of thought have been distinguished in this respect: punitive existence, purgative existence, beatifying and beatific existence. Of these, the inclusion and dogmatic endorsement (at least in the West) of the notion of a punitive existence in the destiny of most Christians after death[15] must represent the most lamentable departure in the history of the doctrinal development. The model of punishment would certainly seem to constitute the least appropriate vehicle for contemporary discourse, its legal formalism appearing necessarily retributive with God, its perpetrator at best vindictive in his dealings with mankind. St. Teresa of Avila's comment - 'If this is how you treat your friends, small wonder that you have so few of them' - is not without its piquancy in this context!

In the past a moral justification for punishment has been found in the conviction that an individual ought not to profit from his wrongdoing and from the pain he has caused - that indeed he ought to suffer loss for the evil he has perpetrated. On this basis, the loss inflicted could be roughly balanced (in theory at any rate) against the damage which the offender had himself done, whether that damage be reckoned in terms of the destruction of the well-being of corporate human life, or as direct injury to the outraged honour of God. When the account had been paid, the matter could be regarded as settled. He had purged his offence. Today, the enormous amount of discussion that has occurred among philosophers and political thinkers has brought into question the validity of such retributive understandings of punishment. Contemporary debate regularly displays the inadequacy of simplistic expositions of the nature of punishment by calling to mind its deterrent and reformatory rôles.[16] The significance of this discussion for our understanding of the viability of language pertaining to punitive existence is not inconsiderable, but it should be stressed that the objection which the theologian raises in connection with discourse about life after death, is not confined to any one theory of the nature of punishment, but relates to the wider issues of the whole propriety and compatability of a legal framework with what is known of the divine-human encounter.

For example, in the movement from fragmentation to fulfilment in man's relationship with God, a movement initiated and sustained by the loving purpose of God, sin comes to be defined as that which is contrary to his will. Sin may be said therefore to possess an objective reality: all acts against the will of God are objectively wrong. But if it is to be acknowledged for what it is, sin requires personal appropriation through an acquaintanceship with what it is to be doing the will of God. In this sense, the concept of sin only has real meaning in a relational context, where it emerges as the definition of the fragmentation of either the bond between man and man, or that which exists between man and God, or both. It is experienced in the disintegration of the relationship itself and through the attendant sense of guilt. Punishment certainly conceived retributively, cannot restore that relationship to wholeness.

Punishment can never affect the fact of guilt. Moral guilt, as an element in the life story of the guilty person, is irreversible. A certain quantity of suffering may conceivably be set against another quantity of suffering. It can hardly be held to cancel a quantity of guilt, which is a reality of an entirely different order. Guilt cannot be eradicated. Indeed a desire for punishment may represent an unconscious desire on the part of the offender to have his guilt-feelings confirmed. Forgiveness alone can be restitutive, being concerned with both parties and with the quality of the relationship between them. Forgiveness alone can remove the guilt because forgiveness demands trust on the part of the giver, and the grace of humility on the part of the offender to accept what is offered.

In the light of this analysis one can see all the more clearly how the doctrine of purgatory as it emerged at the end of the patristic period and as it came to be understood in medieval piety as a state of punishment due for venial sin, far from establishing the quality of divine-human relationships, reflected a legalistic interpretation of the nature of sin and a distorted appreciation of forgiveness. The displacement of personal categories in favour of juridical ones (seen also in the course of the development of ecclesiastical discipline) in its attempt to underpin the moral seriousness of the Christian life, disfigured the integrity of God's dealings with mankind. The emphasis it placed upon the necessity of punishment dissolved the confidence of the Christian hope. In an effort to secure the costliness of grace from erosion, forgiveness had been made subject to the needs of justice and the possibility that suffering could embrace an educative role in a growth to holiness became submerged in the confines of a penal structure. Modern doctrinal articulation if it is to avoid these mistakes must therefore find ways of talking about the destructive power of sin which do not make recourse to legal frameworks and the language of punishment, but which give expression to the freedom and readiness of God to forgive and heal, yet not in such a way as to cheapen grace. Perhaps the language of beatification as tempered

by images of purgation in which the concept of education is not dissociated from that of holiness would provide a viable way forward?

There is certainly no call upon the contemporary theologian to abandon all the old imagery or to disregard the patristic matrix. It is in fact important that he should continue to draw upon the insights of earlier generations, for they contain vital resources of meaning to express vividly the realities he desired to communicate. It may be questioned with some justice whether the linear eschatological scheme of the Fathers has any real viability today. In its own day, there can be no doubt that the framework it offered was relevant and helpful. For one thing it corresponded to a common understanding of the ordering of life and time which we do not possess. Today, in our confusion over the nature of time, we hesitate (perhaps wisely) to accept the primacy of any one eschatological framework over another lest it serve to compound confusion still further. Similarly, on a methodological point, modern critique of the use of religious language might wish to question the desirability of patristic methodology which in the pursuit of an eschatological synthesis appears to have been content to have sacrificed certain possibilities for meaningful discourse to the internal coherence of a system. The diminution of imagery descriptive of the corporate fulfilment that still awaits mankind, the subordination of the consummating and transforming significance of the resurrection, the devaluation of the accredited place of creation in the purposes of God for mankind, the vesting of the language of hope in the shackles of ecclesiastical discipline, and the disengagement of the concept of education from sanctification, and the latter's rigid association with the notion of punishment due for venial sin, all in their different ways testify to the impairment of the flexibility of later patristic writing. This is not to malign the positive insights which were undoubtedly gleaned in the course of six centuries; nor is it to repudiate the importance of coherance in theological formulation. But it is to place a question-mark against some of the products of patristic

codification and to display our changed understanding of the function of language in theological discourse. Increasingly the communication of our appreciation of the truth of our existence and our eternal destiny is coming to rest less in our ability to eradicate inconsistencies, and more in the freer use of models which express the legitimate diversity (and ambiguity?) of the Christian perspective; the truth being located not in any one model as against another, nor yet in their sum total, but rather emerging from their combination and inter-action.

Although the comments and criticisms expressed here are not equal to the task of constructing the pattern for a contemporary theology of death and the state of the departed, their relevance and application to such a task is, it is hoped, not minimal. If a balanced and coherent evaluation of the Christian tradition is to be communicated to the people of our time, then it must relate to the problems of today. In current theological exploration it is necessary more than ever to relate our discussion of the enigma of death and our understanding of life through and beyond death, to the disciplines of medicine and philosophy. For it is evident that the character of the question about life after death has changed with the advent of this century. In previous eras the problems which occupied theologians were subjects such as the propriety of praying for the dead,[17] the destiny of the unbaptised or the question of universalism.[18] Today the very value and significance of the belief itself has become the problem. The doubts raised as has been seen, are philosophical, as to the doctrine's intelligibility, medical, as to its coherence with contemporary physiology and theories of psychodynamics, and sociological, as to the social effect of so believing;[19] and it is against this wider backcloth that this brief addendum has been set in its awareness of the complexity of the current situation and the fact that the answers which the Christian faith claims to offer are only answers if they answer the questions which people are asking. Inevitably not all the questions have been acknowledged much less discussed in depth; but if this study in its attempt to evaluate the language and concepts of the early Christian tradition

has succeeded in justly portraying the merits and inadequacies in the reflections of those earlier generations then perhaps it may yet succeed in revealing the partiality of our own solutions, and so propel us and those of our generation, toward a more creative pursuit of the real questions, if only, with St. Paul, we may 'not be ignorant concerning them that sleep.'

CONCLUSION

FOOTNOTES:

1 see e.g., W.H. Poteat, '"I will die" - An Analysis', PQ 9 (1959) pp. 46 - 58.

2 Dom Sebastian Moore, 'Reflexions on Death (I)', DR 70 (1952) p.373.

3 Emil Brunner, Eternal Hope, London 1954, p.96.

4 see esp., Kaufer, 'A Medical View of the Process of Death,' Concilium 4 (1974) pp. 33 - 42.

5 The exception here might be the amoeba which does not appear to die but divides in perpetuity by simple binary fission into two daughter amoebae.

6 Hick, Death and Eternal Life, London 1976.

7 The importance of grappling with the existential problem of death has been forcefully brought out by John Macquarrie, (An Existentialist Theology, London 1955). Quoting Heidegger, he says that 'only when death is fully grasped in its ontological character are we justified in asking what is after death.' But there are problems in forming such an understanding. Death as a natural phenomenon can be investigated by the phenomenological method, that is to say, man's experience of death (this being considered to stand outside nature) is to be analysed. Clearly there is a difficulty here which does not arise with any other phenomenon of existence. Death is by definition loss of being, and anyone who 'experiences' death is automatically robbed of the possibility of understanding and analysing it. He has ceased to be - at any rate in the sense of having the kind of being that we know in this world - therefore he has ceased to be disclosed to himself, and has no possibility of understanding what his death has been.

8 Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'God's Grandeur'.

9 Brunner, op. cit., p.97.

10 see I Cor. 15 : 55; Rom. 5 ; and relevant section in chapter 2. But the inter-relation of sin and death is also exemplified in the way, for example, the penitential system influenced the development of thought about the state of the departed.

11 Gilbert Greshake, 'Towards a Theology of Dying', Concilium 4 (1974) p.88.

12 Rahner, Theological Investigations, vol. 7. ET London 1971, p.149.

13 With Prof. S.W. Sykes, I use the phrase 'life after death' because it remains in my opinion the clearest way of speaking; that is 'life, continuous in certain fundamental respects with the individual's present personal consciousness of living, temporally following on, and in that sense 'after', the cessation of life on earth. To speak of life after death is not to commit oneself to any theory of natural immortality. But in order to provide minimum conditions of intelligibility for the doctrines of a resurrection to judgement and of the enjoyment of heaven ... the term "life" will inevitably carry temporal connotations which cannot be thought away in some a-temporal conceptuality.' ('Life After Death: the Christian Doctrine of Heaven' art., Creation, Christ and Culture, ed., McKinney, Edinburgh 1976, p.251f.)

14 No attempt will be made to examine these aspects of the discussion or the relative merits of language descriptive of the resurrection of the body or immortality of the soul. On this see: Cullmann, Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Body? London 1958; Fairweather, 'In Defence of Immortality,' Theology 56 (1953) pp. 219 - 22; Flew, 'Death' art., New Essays in Philosophical Theology (ed., Flew & MacIntyre) London 1955, pp. 267 - 72; Harrie, 'The Immortality of the Soul,' RS V (1969) pp. 207 - 22; Hick, op. cit., ; Knox, 'Can the Self Survive the death of its mind?' RS V (1969) pp. 85 - 97; Mouton, 'Physicalism and Immortality,' RS VIII (1972) pp. 45 - 53; Perry, The Resurrection of Man, London 1975; Phillips, Death and Immortality, London 1970; Pieper, Death and Immortality, ET London 1969; Price, 'The Problem of Life After Death,' RS III (1967 - 8) pp. 447 - 59; Sutherland, 'Immortality and Resurrection,' RS III (1967) pp. 377 - 89.

15 It has not been the purpose of this study to examine the state of 'non-Christians' after death or to evaluate the punitive model as expounded in the doctrine of hell. But on this see: Maurice, 'Eternal Life and External Death' in Theological Essays London 1853 (2nd ed); I.T. Ramsey, 'Hell', Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, 2 (1967/8) pp. 207 - 25.

16 For an excellent critique of the current debate see Hart, Punishment and Responsibility, Oxford 1968. He distinguishes three possible views of punishment:

a) retributive - the purpose of punishment is retribution, paying back, e.g. an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth.

b) utilitarian or deterrent - if X has made Y suffer, X should suffer to deter Z from doing same.

c) reformatory - if X has made Y suffer, X should be reformed so that he no longer wishes to do same again.

Strangely, it is the last view which is morally the most difficult to maintain, for it includes the notion of making someone conform, of deciding what sort of person they 'ought' to be - and has the power to make them so. Such a view denies the integrity of man's decisions and freedom. Even the deterrent view has its difficulties. If deterrence is our purpose, why stop at punishing the offender? Lots of things will deter people from committing crime/sin! The retributive theory, which is the least satisfactory superficially, at least states where punishment stops. It introduces justice - an eye for an eye, not a life for an eye! It individuates responsibility and sets boundaries. When the debt is paid, the offender returns to society as an equal member. Thus restoration is allowed for.
But the application of any of these views of punishment to God's dealings with mankind clearly presents difficulties: does God force us to conform to his will? Are there boundaries to the suffering he will impose on us? Is God petty or merely vindictive? Questions such as these reveal the inherent difficulty of applying the model of punishment (however conceived) to discourse about life beyond death.

17 The problem of intercession for the dead is only a limited aspect of the coincidence of the Christian understanding of prayer and the Christian hope for human destiny. All Christians are agreed that praise and thanksgiving should be offered to God for his grace and goodness revealed in the lives of those who have been his servants, and for the reality of their fellowship in Christ with them (whatever that may mean in real terms). It is only on the question of whether this praise should be extended into prayer of intercession for the departed that division has come, at least since the time of the Reformation and even (amazingly) contemporarily. It is interesting to note, however, that protestant opposition to the practice has faded (in England, at any rate) with the impact of the sheer grossness of the First World War. Since then any problems which have been raised are largely philosophical in orientation and apply equally to petition for the living by the living, e.g., when a man prays for the dead, is he asking God to do things He has already determined to do or not to do, so that his prayer can have no effect upon the issue, one way or the other? Is he asking God to change His mind as to the fate of or treatment in store for, particular souls? Does the Christian assume that in default of his prayers God will not do the good things for which he asks?

18 These were prominent problems in the last century. See Rowell, Hell and the Victorians, Oxford, 1974.

19 This aspect of the contemporary scene was discussed in the introduction.

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