Purgatory: illustrated by the lives and legends of the saints

by

Schouppe, F. X. (François Xavier), 1823-1904

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THE DOGMA OF PURGATORY
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PURGATORY

ILLUSTRATED BY THE LIVES AND LEGENDS OF THE SAINTS

BY

REV. F. X. SCHOUPE, S.J.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

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THE

DOGMA OF PURGATORY.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

Object of the Work—To what Class of Readers it is Addressed—What we are Obliged to Believe, what we may Piously Believe, and what we are at Liberty not to Admit—Visions and Apparitions—Blind Credulity and Exaggerated Incredulity.

The Dogma of Purgatory is too much forgotten by the majority of the faithful; the Church Suffering, where they have so many brethren to succour, whither they foresee that they themselves must one day go, seems a strange land to them.

This truly deplorable forgetfulness was a great sorrow to St. Francis de Sales. "Alas!" said this pious doctor of the Church, "we do not sufficiently remember our dear departed; their memory seems to perish with the sound of the funeral-bells."

The principal causes of this are ignorance and lack of faith; our notions on the subject of Purgatory are too vague, our faith is too feeble.

In order, then, that our ideas may become more distinct and our faith enlivened, we must take a closer view of this
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life beyond the tomb, this intermediate state of the just souls, not yet worthy to enter the Heavenly Jerusalem.

This is the object of the present work: we propose not to prove the existence of Purgatory to sceptical minds, but to make it better known to the pious faithful who believe with a divine faith this dogma revealed of God. It is to them, properly speaking, that this book is addressed, to give them a less confused idea of Purgatory. I say purposely a clearer idea than people generally have, by placing this great truth in the strongest possible light.

To produce this effect we possess three very distinct sources of light: first, the dogmatic doctrine of the Church; then the doctrine as explained by the doctors of the Church; in the third place, the revelations and apparitions of the saints, which serve to confirm the teachings of the doctors.

1. The dogmatic doctrine of the Church on the subject of Purgatory comprises two articles, of which we shall speak later on.¹ These two articles are of faith, and must be believed by every Catholic.

2. The teaching of the doctors and theologians, or rather their opinions on several questions relative to Purgatory, and their explanations of them, are not imposed as articles of faith;² we are free to reject them without ceasing to be Catholic. Nevertheless, it would be imprudent, and even rash, to reject them, and it is the spirit of the Church to follow the opinions commonly held by the doctors.

3. The revelations of the saints, called also particular revelations, do not belong to the deposit of faith confided by Jesus Church to His Church; they are historical facts, based upon human testimony. It is permitted to believe them, and piety finds wholesome food in them. We may,

¹ See Chap. iii. ² See also lower down, Chap. iii.
however, disbelieve them without sinning against faith; but they are authenticated, and we cannot reject them without offending against reason; because sound reason demands that all men should give assent to truth when it is sufficiently demonstrated.

To illustrate this subject more clearly, let us, in the first place, explain the nature of the revelations of which we speak.

Particular revelations are of two kinds: the one consists in visions, the other in apparitions. They are called particular, because they differ from those found in Holy Scripture, not forming part of the doctrine revealed for mankind, and not being proposed by the Church to our belief as dogmas of faith.

Visions, properly so called, are subjective lights, infused by God into the understanding of His creatures, in order to discover to them His mysteries. Such are the visions of the prophets, those of St. Paul, of St. Bridget, and many other saints. These visions usually take place when the subject is in a state of ecstasy; they consist in certain mysterious representations, which appear to the eyes of the soul, and which must not always be taken literally. Frequently they are figures, symbolic images, which represent in a manner proportionate to the capacity of our understanding, things purely spiritual, of which ordinary language is incapable of conveying an idea.

Apparitions, at least, frequently are objective phenomena which have a real exterior object. Such was the apparition of Moses and Elias on Mount Thabor; that of Samuel evoked by the Witch of Endor; that of the Angel Raphael to Tobias; those of many other angels; in fine, such are the apparitions of the souls in Purgatory.

That the spirits of the dead sometimes appear to the living, is a fact that cannot be denied. Does not the
Gospel clearly suppose it? When the risen Jesus appeared for the first time to His assembled apostles, *they supposed they saw a spirit*. Our Saviour, far from saying that spirits appear not, spoke to them thus: *Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have* (Luke xxiv. 37, &c.).

Apparitions of the souls that are in Purgatory are of frequent occurrence. We find them in great numbers in the "Lives of the Saints;" they happen sometimes to the ordinary faithful. We have collected those which appear best qualified to instruct or to edify, and we now present them to the reader. But, it may be asked, are all these facts historically certain? We have selected the best authenticated. If, among the number, the reader finds any which he thinks could not stand the rigour of criticism, he need not admit them. In order to avoid an excessive severity, one which is akin to incredulity, it is good to remark that, generally speaking, apparitions of souls occur, and that they frequently occur cannot be doubted. "Ap-

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1 It is from the lives of the saints, honoured as such by the Church, and other illustrious servants of God, that we have taken the greater part of the examples herein cited. The reader who wishes to investigate these facts, in order to give them their just value, may without difficulty have recourse to the originals by the aid of our references. If the incident is drawn from the life of a saint, we indicate the day on which his name is entered on the martyrology, which is sufficient for consulting the Acta Sanctorum. If we mention any venerable personage, such as Father Joseph Anchieta, Apostle and Thaumaturgus of Brazil, whose life is not inserted in the volumes of the Bollandists, they must then have recourse to biographies and particular histories. For the examples borrowed from Father Rosignoli, *Merveilles Divines dans les Ames du Purgatoire* (trans. Postel; Tournai, Casterman), we content ourselves by marking the number of the *Merveille*, because the author has there indicated one or more sources whence he himself has drawn.
paritions of this kind,” says the Abbé Ribet,1 “are not uncommon. God permits them for the relief of souls in order to excite our compassion, and also to make us sensible of how terrible are the rigours of His Justice against those faults which we consider trivial.” St. Gregory in his “Dialogues” cites several examples, of which, it is true, we may dispute the full authenticity; but which, in the mouth of this holy doctor, prove at least that he believed in the possibility of the existence of these phenomena. A great number of other authors, not less reliable than St. Gregory, both on account of sanctity and learning, relate similar instances. Moreover, incidents of this sort abound in the lives of the saints. To be convinced of this, it suffices to peruse the Acta Sanctorum.

The Church Suffering has ever implored the suffrages of the Church Militant; and this intercourse, bearing the impress of sadness, yet also full of instruction, is for the one a source of inexhaustible relief, and for the other a powerful incitement to sanctity.

The vision of Purgatory has been granted to many holy souls. St. Catherine de Ricci descended in spirit into Purgatory every Sunday night; St. Lidwina, during her raptures, penetrated into this place of expiation, and, conducted by her angel-guardian, visited the souls in their torments. In like manner, an angel led Blessed Osanne of Mantua through this dismal abyss.

Blessed Veronica of Binasco, St. Frances of Rome, and many others had visions exactly similar, with impressions of terror.

More frequently it is the souls themselves that appear to the living and implore their intercession. Many appeared in this manner to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, and to

1 La Mystique Divine, distinguée des Contrefaçons Diaboliques et des Analogies Humaines. Paris, Poussielgue.
a great number of other holy persons. The souls departed frequently besought the intercession of Denis the Carthusian. This great servant of God was one day asked how many times the holy souls appeared to him? "Oh! hundreds of times," he replied.

St. Catherine of Sienna, in order to spare her father the pains of Purgatory, offered herself to the Divine Justice to suffer in his stead during her whole life. God accepted her offer, inflicted the most excruciating torments upon her, which lasted until her death, and admitted the soul of her father into eternal glory. In return this blessed soul frequently appeared to his daughter to thank her, and to make to her many useful revelations.

When the souls in Purgatory appear to the living, they always present themselves in an attitude which excites compassion; now with the features which they had during life or at their death, with a sad countenance and imploring looks, in garments of mourning, with an expression of extreme suffering; then like a mist, a light, a shadow, or some kind of fantastic figure, accompanied by a sign or word by which they may be recognised. At other times they betray their presence by moans, sobs, sighs, or hurried respiration and plaintive accents. They often appear enveloped in flames. When they speak, it is to manifest their sufferings, to deplore their past faults, to ask suffrages, or even to address reproaches to those who ought to succour them. Another kind of revelation, adds the same author, is made by invisible blows which the living receive, by the violent shutting of doors, the rattling of chains, and the sounds of voices.

These facts are too multiplied to admit of doubt; the only difficulty is to establish their connection with the world of expiation. But when these manifestations coincide with the death of persons dear to us, when they cease,
after prayers and reparations have been made to God in their behalf, is it not reasonable to see therein signs by which the souls make known their distress?

In the various phenomena to which we have just drawn attention we recognise the souls in Purgatory. But there is a case when the apparition should be held in suspicion; it is when a notorious sinner, unexpectedly carried away by a sudden death, comes to implore the prayers of the living that he may be delivered from Purgatory. The devil is interested in making us believe that we can live in the greatest disorders until the moment of our death and yet escape Hell. However, even in such instances, it is not forbidden to think that the soul which appears has repented, and that it is in the temporary flames of expiation; nor, consequently, is it forbidden to pray for it, but it is proper to observe the greatest caution in regard to visions of this kind, and the credit which we give to them.¹

The details into which we have entered suffice to justify in the eyes of the reader the quotation of facts which he will find in the course of this work.

Let us add that the Christian must guard against too great incredulity in supernatural facts connected with dogmas of faith. St. Paul tells us that Charity believeth all things,² that is to say, as interpreters explain it, all that which we may prudently believe, and of which the belief will not be prejudicial. If it is true that prudence rejects a blind and superstitious credulity, it is also true that we must avoid another extreme, that with which our Saviour reproached the Apostle St. Thomas. "You believe," He said to him, "because you have seen and touched; it were better to have believed the testimony of your brethren. In exacting more, you have been guilty of incredulity; this is a fault that all My disciples should avoid. Blessed are they that have

¹ Ribet, Mystique Divine, vol. ii. chap. x. ² 1 Cor. xiii. 7.
not seen, and have believed. Be not faithless, but believing.” (John xx. 27).

The theologian who expounds dogmas of faith must be severe in the choice of his proofs; the historian must proceed with rigorous circumspection in the narration of facts, but the ascetic writer, who cites examples to illustrate truths and edify the faithful, is not held to this strict rigour. The best authorised persons in the Church, such as St. Gregory, St. Bernard, St. Frances de Sales, St. Alphonsus Liguori, Bellarmine, and many others, as much distinguished for their learning as for their piety, when writing their excellent works knew nothing of the fastidious requirements of the present day—requirements which in nowise constitute progress.

In fact, if the spirit of our fathers in the faith was more simple, what is the cause of the disappearance of that ancient simplicity in the present time? Is it not the Protestant Rationalism with which, in our day, so many of our Catholics are infected? Is it not the spirit of reasoning and criticism that emanated from the Lutheran Reformation, propagated by French Philosophism, which, leading them to consider the things of God from a purely human point of view, makes them cold, and alienates them from the Spirit of God? The Venerable Louis of Blois, speaking of the “Revelations of St. Gertrude,” says: “This book contains treasures. Proud and carnal men,” he adds, “who understand nothing of the Spirit of God, treat as reveries the writings of the holy virgin Gertrude, of St. Mechtilde, St. Hildegarde, and others; it is because they are ignorant of the familiarity with which God communicates Himself to humble, simple, and loving souls, and how in these intimate communications He is pleased to illumine these souls with the pure light of truth, without any shadow of error.”

1 Louis of Blois, Epist. ad Florentium.
These words of Louis of Blois are serious. We did not wish to incur the reproach of this great master in the spiritual life, and, whilst avoiding a blameworthy credulity, we have collected with a certain kind of liberty those which seem to us at once the best authenticated and the most instructive. May they increase in those who read them devotion towards the faithful departed. May they profoundly inspire all who read them with a holy and salutary fear of Purgatory.
TRANSLATOR’S PREFACE

The author of this work is the well-known writer, Rev. Father F. X. Schouppe, of the Society of Jesus. The reverend author scarcely needs any introduction to English readers, as several of his valuable works have been already translated from French into English. To the reverend clergy the author is best known through his works on Dogmatic Theology and Sacred Scripture, which, in the judgment of competent critics, possess the very highest order of merit. In this work on Purgatory they will find the same fulness and solidity of thought and judgment, joined with wonderful clearness and simplicity of diction, which distinguish the above works. We are confident that the reverend clergy will hail with delight the appearance of this work in an English garb, and will give it their esteemed encouragement.

A profound theologian and Scriptural scholar, acquainted as only very few are with the writings of the Fathers, the author was specially equipped for writing a work of this kind. A faithful and devoted son of the Church, his works are ever guided by a Catholic instinct, which keeps them in harmony with Catholic faith and Catholic practice.

The subject of this book is at once dear and interesting to every Catholic heart. About the existence of this intermediate state Catholics have no more doubt than of the existence of Heaven or Hell. The Church, by her
authoritative teaching, has decided the matter for all time. "The Catholic Church," says the Council of Trent, "instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught in sacred councils, and very recently in the Ecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar" (Sess. 25).

The pious reader cannot fail to have his faith nourished and strengthened after reading a chapter of this book; and realising how much help and comfort he can bring to the poor souls, his charity will prompt him to come to their assistance and rescue. Their cries, wafted hither on the wings of faith from the shore of eternity, will not appeal to him in vain. A new interest will spring up within him for that realm of pain yet also of hope, where those not wholly pure are cleansed and prepared for everlasting joys.

This work has been translated into English at the earnest request of the author. Wishing that devotion for the holy souls might grow and flourish in many hearts, he considered that his purpose would be best attained by having this work translated into English, for the benefit of English-speaking readers. It may also interest the readers of this book to know that the learned author is at present labouring for the salvation of souls among the pagan people of India.

The translator has specially aimed at giving the exact sense of the author, without any attempt at style or literary finish. Such an attempt, she believes, would detract from the value of the work as a whole.

For the rest, should this work contribute even in a small measure to the greater glory of God and of Holy Church;
should it make the doctrine of Purgatory better understood; should it convince its readers of the excellence of devotion for the holy souls, and inspire at least some of them with a holy zeal to practise it, then indeed would the ambition of the author and translator be realised.

J. J. S.
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PROTESTATION OF THE AUTHOR

In conformity to the decree of Urban VIII., Sanctissimum, of March 13, 1525, we declare that if in this work we have cited facts represented to be supernatural, nothing but a personal and private authority is to be attached to our opinion; the discernment of facts of this kind belongs to the supreme authority of the Church.
Part First.

Purgatory, the Mystery of Justice.

CHAPTER I.

Purgatory in the Divine Plan.

Purgatory occupies an important place in our holy religion: it forms one of the principal parts of the work of Jesus Christ, and plays an essential rôle in the economy of the salvation of man.

Let us call to mind that the Holy Church of God, considered as a whole, is composed of three parts: The Church Militant, the Church Triumphant, and the Church Suffering, or Purgatory. This triple Church constitutes the mystical body of Jesus Christ, and the souls in Purgatory are no less His members than are the faithful upon earth and the elect in Heaven. In the Gospel, the Church is ordinarily called the Kingdom of Heaven; now Purgatory, just as the heavenly and terrestrial Church, is a province of this vast kingdom.

The three Churches have incessant relations with each other, a continual communication which we call the Communion of Saints. These relations have no other object than to conduct souls to eternal glory, the final term to which all the elect tend. The three Churches mutually
assist in peopling Heaven, which is the permanent city, the glorious Jerusalem.

What then is the work which we, members of the Church Militant, have to do for the souls in Purgatory? We have to alleviate their sufferings. God has placed in our hands the key of this mysterious prison: it is prayer for the dead, devotion to the souls in Purgatory.

CHAPTER II.

Prayer for the Dead—Fear and Confidence.

Prayer for the departed, sacrifices, and suffrages for the dead form a part of Christian worship, and devotion towards the souls in Purgatory is a devotion which the Holy Ghost infuses with charity into the hearts of the faithful. It is a holy and wholesome thought, says Holy Scripture, to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.\(^1\)

In order to be perfect, devotion to the souls in Purgatory must be animated both by a spirit of faith and a spirit of confidence. On the one hand, the sanctity of God and His Justice inspires us with a salutary fear. On the other, His infinite Mercy gives us boundless confidence.

God is Sanctity itself, much more so than the sun is light, and no shadow of sin can endure before His face. Thine eyes are pure, says the prophet, and thou canst not look on iniquity.\(^2\) When iniquity manifests itself in creatures, the Sanctity of God exacts expiation, and when this expiation is made in all the rigour of justice, it is terrible. It is for this reason that the Scripture says again, Holy and terrible

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\(^1\) Machab. xii. 46.  
\(^2\) Habac. i. 13.
is His name; as though it would say, His Justice is terrible because His Sanctity is infinite.

The Justice of God is terrible, and it punishes with extreme rigour even the most trivial faults. The reason is, that these faults, light in our eyes, are in nowise so before God. The least sin displeases Him infinitely, and, on account of the infinite Sanctity which is offended, the slightest transgression assumes enormous proportions, and demands enormous atonement. This explains the terrible severity of the pains of the other life, and should penetrate us with a holy fear.

This fear of Purgatory is a salutary fear; its effect is, not only to animate us with a charitable compassion towards the poor suffering souls, but also with a vigilant zeal for our own spiritual welfare. Think of the fire of Purgatory, and you will endeavour to avoid the least faults; think of the fire of Purgatory, and you will practise penance, that you may satisfy Divine Justice in this world rather than in the next.

Let us, however, guard against excessive fear, and not lose confidence. Let us not forget the Mercy of God, which is not less infinite than His Justice. Thy mercy, Lord, is great above the Heavens, says the prophet; and elsewhere, The Lord is gracious and merciful: patient, and plenteous in mercy. This ineffable mercy should calm the most lively apprehensions, and fill us with a holy confidence, according to the words, In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum—"In Thee, O Lord, I have hoped; let me never be put to confusion."

If we are animated with this double sentiment, if our confidence in God’s Mercy is equal to the fear with which His Justice inspires us, we shall have the true spirit of devotion to the souls in Purgatory.

This double sentiment springs naturally from the dogma of Purgatory rightly understood—a dogma which contains

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1 Ps. cx. 2 Ps. cvii. 3 Ps. cxliv. 4 Ps. lxv.
the double mystery of Justice and Mercy: of Justice which punishing, of Mercy which pardons. It is from this double point of view that we are about to consider Purgatory and illustrate its doctrine.

CHAPTER III.


The word Purgatory is sometimes taken to mean a place, sometimes as an intermediate state between Hell and Heaven. It is, properly speaking, the condition of souls which, at the moment of death, are in the state of grace, but which have not completely expiated their faults, nor attained the degree of purity necessary to enjoy the vision of God.

Purgatory is, then, a transitory state which terminates in a life of everlasting happiness. It is not a trial by which merit may be gained or lost, but a state of atonement and expiation. The soul has arrived at the term of its earthly career; that life was a time of trial, a time of merit for the soul, a time of mercy on the part of God. This time once expired, nothing but justice is to be expected from God, whilst the soul can neither gain nor lose merit. She remains in the state in which death found her; and since it found her in the state of sanctifying grace, she is certain of never forfeiting that happy state, and of arriving at the eternal possession of God. Nevertheless, since she is burdened with certain debts of temporal punishment, she must satisfy Divine Justice by enduring this punishment in all its rigour.

Such is the signification of the word Purgatory, and the condition of the souls which are there.
Purgatory, the Myst

Of Justice.

On this subject the Church proposes two truths clearly-defined as dogmas of faith: first, that there is a Purgatory; second, that the souls which are in Purgatory may be assisted by the suffrages of the faithful, especially by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Besides these two dogmatic points, there are several doctrinal questions which the Church has not decided, and which are more or less clearly solved by the Doctors. These questions relate (1) to the location of Purgatory; (2) to the nature of the sufferings; (3) to the number and condition of the souls which are in Purgatory; (4) to the certainty which they have of their beatitude; (5) to the duration of their sufferings; (6) to the intervention of the living in their behalf, and the application of the suffrages of the Church.

CHAPTER IV.

Location of Purgatory—Doctrine of Theologians—Catechism of the Council of Trent—St. Thomas.

Although faith tells us nothing definite regarding the location of Purgatory, the most common opinion, that which most accords with the language of Scripture, and which is the most generally received among theologians, places it in the bowels of the earth, not far from the Hell of the reprobates. Theologians are almost unanimous, says Bellarmin, in teaching that Purgatory, at least the ordinary place of expiation, is situated in the interior of the earth, that the souls in Purgatory and the reprobate are in the same subterranean space in the deep abyss which the Scripture calls Hell.

When we say in the Apostles' Creed that after His

1 Catech. Rom., chap. vi. § 1.
death Jesus Christ descended into Hell, the name Hell, says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, signifies those hidden places where the souls are detained which have not yet reached eternal beatitude. But these prisons are of different kinds. One is a dark and gloomy dungeon, where the damned are continually tormented by evil spirits, and by a fire which is never extinguished. This place, which is Hell properly so called, is also named Gehenna and abyss.

There is another Hell, which contains the fire of Purgatory. There the souls of the just suffer for a certain time, that they may become entirely purified before being admitted into their heavenly fatherland, where nothing defiled can ever enter.

A third Hell was that into which the souls of the saints who died before the coming of Jesus Christ were received, and in which they enjoyed peaceful repose, exempt from pain, consoled and sustained by the hope of their redemption. They were those holy souls which awaited Jesus Christ in Abraham’s bosom, and which were delivered when Christ descended into Hell. Our Saviour suddenly diffused among them a brilliant light, which filled them with infinite joy, and gave them sovereign beatitude, which is the vision of God. Then was fulfilled the promise of Jesus to the good thief: This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.

“‘A very probable opinion,” says St. Thomas,1 “and one which, moreover, corresponds with the words of the saints in particular revelation is, that Purgatory has a double place for expiation. The first will be destined for the generality of souls, and is situated below, near to Hell; the second will be for particular cases, and it is from thence that so many apparitions occur.”

The holy Doctor admits, then, like so many others who share his opinions, that sometimes Divine Justice assigns

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1 Supplem., part. iii. ques. ult.
Purgatory, the Mystery of Justice. 7

A special place of purification to certain souls, and even permits them to appear either to instruct the living or to procure for the departed the suffrages of which they stand in need; sometimes also for other motives worthy of the wisdom and mercy of God.

Such is the general view concerning the location of Purgatory. Since we are not writing a controversial treatise, we add neither proofs nor refutations; these can be seen in authors such as Suarez and Bellarmine. We will content ourselves by remarking that the opinion concerning a subterranean Hell has nothing to fear from modern science. A science purely natural is incompetent in questions which belong, as does this one, to the supernatural order. Moreover, we know that spirits may be in a place occupied by bodies, as though these bodies did not exist. Whatever, then, the interior of the earth may be, whether it be entirely of fire, as geologists commonly say, or whether it be in any other state, there is nothing to prevent its serving as a sojourn of spirits, even of spirits clothed with a risen body. The Apostle St. Paul teaches us that the air is filled with a multitude of evil spirits: We have to combat, says he, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.1

On the other hand, we know that the good angels who protect us are no less numerous in the world. Now, if angels and other spirits can inhabit our atmosphere, whilst the physical world is not in the least degree changed, why cannot the souls of the dead dwell in the bosom of the earth?

1 Ephes. vi. 12.
CHAPTER V.

Location of Purgatory—Revelations of the Saints—St. Teresa—St. Louis Bertrand—St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi.

St. Teresa had great charity towards the souls in Purgatory, and assisted them as much as lay in her power by her prayers and good works. In recompense, God frequently showed her the souls she had delivered; she saw them at the moment of their release from suffering and of their entrance into Heaven. Now, they generally came forth from the bosom of the earth. "I received tidings," she writes, "of the death of a Religious who had formerly been Provincial of that province, and afterwards of another. I was acquainted with him, and he had rendered me great service. This intelligence caused me great uneasiness. Although this man was commendable for many virtues, I was apprehensive for the salvation of his soul, because he had been Superior for the space of twenty years, and I always fear much for those who are charged with the care of souls. Much grieved, I went to an oratory; there I conjured our Divine Lord to apply to this Religious the little good I had done during my life, and to supply the rest by His infinite merits, in order that this soul might be freed from Purgatory.

"Whilst I besought this grace with all the fervour of which I was capable, I saw on my right side this soul come forth from the depths of the earth and ascend into Heaven in transports of joy. Although this priest was advanced in years, he appeared to me with the features of a man who had not yet attained the age of thirty, and with a countenance resplendent with light.

"This vision, though very short, left me inundated with joy, and without a shadow of doubt as to the truth of what I had seen. As I was separated by a great distance from