

between death and judgment as one in which the soul is stationary or torpid.* We can picture to ourselves—and who can condemn us? the feeble spark of spiritual life, here oppressed and ready to expire, there fanned into a glorious flame: we can picture to ourselves souls amidst conditions infinitely favourable to spiritual development, expecting with ever-increasing preparedness the final day. And the other side of the picture may be looked at too: the souls that would not be healed, ripening in their wickedness, and preparing themselves through a long interval, for companionship with the leaders of the first revolt.

β. Neither Holy Scripture nor the Catholic church has ever taught with such dogmatic plainness that death is the end of all probation, as to justify us in imposing the opinion on our fellow-Christians as a necessary belief. I think it is a perilous thing to hold loose views on this point: it serves to rob life of its solemnity, the Christian of his earnestness. For myself I cannot but think that the spiritual life must here be at least begun. So distinctly believed some of the best Christians of early days. S. Clement of Rome, says, "After we have gone forth of this world, no longer shall we there be able to confess or repent." (ii. Ep. §. viii.) "There is no confession in the grave (says Cyprian) nor can any one be constrained by us to repentance, if the fruit of repentance be taken away." (Ep. iv. §. xiv. "These are the wise virgins (says St. Hilary in loc.) who embraced the opportune season of working while they were in the body." So, in general, the Catholic church has ever taught, and so, apparently the Sacred Scriptures.† Yet though this seems the

* "Quid ergo fiet in tempore isto? dormiemus? Aut nihil vis agi illic, quo universa humanitas trahitur, quo spes omnis sequestratur?" Tertull. De Anima, c. 58.

† "Neque negandum est, defunctorum animas pietate suorum viventium relevari, quum, pro illis sacrificium mediatoris offertur, vel eleemosynæ in ecclesia fiunt. Sed eis hæc prosunt, qui quum viverent, ut hæc sibi postea possent prodesse meruerunt." St. Aug., Enchiri. c. cx.

This was the doctrine of the Rabbins. The Rev. Joseph McCaul, on pp.