

transgressions into which we habitually and almost inadvertently fall. At the same time we know that God cannot bear to look on iniquity, however small; that He requires whatever comes into His presence to be perfectly pure and worthy of Him; and we might rationally conclude that there should be some means whereby they who are in the middle state of offence, between deep and deadly transgressions on the one hand, and a state of perfect purity and holiness on the other, may be dealt with according to the just measure of His justice. What then, in God's name," asks Cardinal Wiseman, after writing what precedes, "is there in this doctrine, viewed simply in itself, that can make it so popular a theme of declamation against Catholics?" *

The so-called Reformation is responsible for the rejection of the doctrine of a place of temporary punishment after life, a doctrine, however, which dates back to Apostolic times, and which, in fact, was held by the Jews, before the coming of our Lord. Nor is it necessary, in proof of this, to take the Book of Macabees as belonging to the canon of Scripture—which it certainly does—but simply as a reliable historical record of facts and of Jewish customs and beliefs.

When we are told that Judas, the great leader, "sent 12,000 drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice, to be offered for the sins of the dead," † and in the same breath, "that it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins," ‡ we are told, equivalently, that the Jews believed in an intermediate state, wherein the face of God was not enjoyed and yet eternal punishment was not endured, since, through prayer and sacrifice, the suffering souls might

* Lecture XI, On the Doctrines of the Church.

† Book II., Ch. XII.

‡ Ibid. V. 43-46.