146 Furnace (*Fornax*)

It is one of good things by which the just men are tested, Eccli. [21:6]: “The furnace tries the potter's vessels.” Or it is one of the evil things by which the reprobate are punished, Apo. [9:2]: “The smoke of the pit arose, as the smoke of a great furnace.”

But each of these is double. For one is of the inner mind which is called the affliction of penance. The other is of the external flesh which is called the tribulation of patience. In the first silver is purged. In the second gold is tested.[[1]](#endnote-1) The inner furnace of evil things is the worm of conscience through which one is racked for his faults.

¶ The exterior furnace is the fire of hell through which they are racked in pain.

And just as in the bodily furnace there are bellows, fire, coals, fire-tongs, and a sprinkler. Thus, in the furnace of penance the blowing bellows is the fear of being looked at carefully, the burning first is the sorrow of admonition, the red coal is the shame of confession, the binding fire-tongs is the work of satisfaction, and the distilling sprinkler is the work of justification.

1. Cf. William de Lancea*, Diaeta salutis* 5.7 (8:302a): Est itaque fortitudo sicut fornax, aurum probans: nam sicut fornax reddit aurum lucidum, sic fortitudinis virtus facit hominem honestum et decorum. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)