208 Place (*Locus*)

There are four places in which souls now dwell, namely, hell, purgatory, paradise, and this world. In hell are men tested irremediably. Wherefore work does no good there, Exod. 15[:5]: “They are sunk to the bottom like a stone.” In paradise are those saved eternally. Wherefore work is not necessary there, Psal. [123:7]: “The snare is broken, and we are delivered.” In purgatory, the dangers have passed, and they pay what they owe there. Wherefore there is no meritorious action but satisfactory suffering, but in this world, we are in danger because we are endangered by evil works and we are saved by good.

Wherefore it was said to Abraham, Gen. 13[:14]: “Lift your eyes,” in a straight line, “and look from the place wherein you now are, to the north,” to hell, “and to the south,” paradise, “to the east,” of grace, “and to the west,” of fault. But note here that so it is concerning the perverse in the present, just as concerning the matter which stands in the place of offense, which immediately when it is seized is removed. So, sinners who now stand in offense of God and scandal of the people will be removed. Sometimes strongly and suddenly, Job 27[:21]: “A burning wind shall take him up ... and as a whirlwind shall snatch him from his place.” And Apo. 2[:5]: “Be mindful therefore from whence thou art fallen,” and it follows “Or else I come and will move your candlestick,” that is, your body, “out of its place, except you do penance.” This world is a place of pilgrimage, tribulation, and labor.

Concerning which see below, chapter [239] the World (*Mundus*).

Chrysostom, *Homilia de parasceue,[[1]](#endnote-1)* says that God ordered that they come out of every land and come together in one place to sacrifice to himself, because then every land was polluted by sacrifices of the gentiles. But because now Christ in his coming has cleansed every land every place of prayer is open. Wherefore the Apostle [1] Tim. 2[:8]: “I will that men pray in every place, lifting up pure hands.” Therefore, now every place is considered holy. Chrysostom, God is not enclosed by place but is held by faith. Wherefore in general three things are distinguished, the highest place, the middle, and the lowest. The first is of the blessed, the second of those on the way, and the third of the damned. Therefore, the middle place is said of those on the way because it is the way to either of the exteriors. Therefore, it is said in Eccle. 11[:3]: “If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place so ever it shall fall, there shall it be.” The south is the place towards heaven which is for us and the north is down below. Wherefore it is to be known that just as there are three things which make a matter to go up, namely, purity, lightness, and agility, so the purity of cleanness.

¶ The example in liquids is that the purer ascends to the surface, so in trees of flowers where the purer is in the tree holds the upper position, so for the world and man, Psal. [14:1; 23:4]: “Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle,” etc., and it follows, “innocent in hands, and clean of heart.”

Second, the lightness of mercy makes it ascend. For mercy frees man from temporal things which make him heavy, Eccli. 16[:15]: “All mercy shall make a place for every man according to the merit of his works, and according to the wisdom of his sojournment.” Whoever recognizes himself here to be a pilgrim sends his goods through the hands of the poor to the place to which he will come. Wherefore Christ said Matt. 25[:34-35]: “Come, blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat,” etc.

Third, quickness to obedience makes one to ascend. For what is agile is easily moved, so those obedient to Christ. Therefore, says John 14[:2]: “I go to prepare a place for you.” And in Psal. 41:5]: “I shall go over into the place of his tabernacle.” About which Baruch 3[:24]: “O Israel, how great is the house of God, and how vast is the place of his possession,” etc.

¶ Concerning the middle place which is the world, note that man through sin lost the place of delights and was thrust out here to a place of penance and labor, Wis. 12[:19]: “You have made your children to be of a good hope, in a place for repentance for sins.” But this one was cast out because in his pride the demons would defile men and therefore, they tempted them to evil lest they arrive at that place from whence they had fallen. Therefore, because of the perils which are in this place Jacob on account of this place, Gen. 28[:17]: “Terrible is this place,” and however in the truth of the matter, “this is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven,” namely, to be aware of these snares.

Again, penance can be said as a place because of the security of salvation. Just as a place saves, so penance from God because he who is without it perishes, John 8[:21]: “You shall die in your sin.” For it is so concerning the sanctity of life as concerning a holy place to which whoever flees will be saved, Exod. 3[:5]: “The place whereon you stand is holy ground.” Jer. 14[:13]: “He will give you true peace in this place.”

¶ Concerning the third, he who is in hell, note that it is a place of darkness, of much punishment, and Luke 16[:28]: “Lest they also come into this place of torments.” And Job 18[:21]: “These men are the tabernacles of the wicked, and this the place of him that knows not God.”

1. John Chrysostom, *Oratio in Crucem et in Confessionem Latronis, Recitata in Sancta et Magna Parasceue, et quod oporteat pro inimicis orare.* 1 (PG 49:409): Judaeis enim ob hoc praecepit Deus, ut tota terra relicta in uno loco immolaret et preces in uno loco funderent. Nam cura tota terra tunc contaminata esset fumo et nidore et idololatrice sanguine, et aliis gentilium inquinamentis, ideo illis unum locum imperavit. Sed cum Christus venit, et extra civitatem mortem obiit, universam terram mundavit, omnemque locum oratione idoneum effecit. ... Audi iterum beatum Paulum dicentem: *In omni loco levantes puras manus sine ira et disceptatione* (1 Tim. 2.8). ... Omnis enim terra de caetero santificata est, imo sanctior est illis Judaeorum sanctis. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)