

therein a pure hope for themselves when they pass through the valley of the shadow as well as precious comfort that their loved ones who have died in Christ are in His blessed presence where there is neither sorrow nor sighing and where all tears are wiped away by the gracious touch of our Saviour's hand.

THE ARGUMENT FOR PURGATORY

The teaching on purgatorial fires did not arise by chance. The remark is made that few people are good enough at death to enter directly into heaven. Therefore God being too merciful to send almost all mankind to hell provided a kind of fiery vestibule to paradise where believers could pay the balance of their debt. To speak accurately, Roman Catholics believe that all sin must receive both temporal and eternal punishment. The eternal punishment due to all believers has been fully borne by Christ upon the cross. The temporal punishment must be born by believers either in this life or in purgatory. One's friends may bear part of this temporal punishment, and so at the discretion of the priests an indulgence may be given from the excess merit of saints stored up in the Church's treasury of merit--a kind of spiritual bank of good works.

The thing is logical if the premises are once granted. The fact that the doctrine is not found in the Bible or in the earliest Church fathers only shows that the premises ~~of~~ salvation by faith plus works, indulgences for sin, and a treasury of merit--are themselves inventions of the Roman Catholic Church.

Very few are good enough to enter heaven at death, they say. But the Bible says no one is good enough: "There is none who does good, no, not even one" (Romans 3:11, *Congrat.* ed.) "For there is no distinction, as all have sinned and have need of the glory of God. They are justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:23,24, *Congrat.* ed.). Fundamental Protestant